



# Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



TUESDAY — 19 JUL 2022

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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	07/19 Britain record shattering temperature
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/19/world/uk-europe-heat-weather">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/19/world/uk-europe-heat-weather</a>

GIST	<p>LONDON — Britain made meteorological history before noon on Tuesday, when the thermometer in Surrey recorded a provisional reading of 39.1 degrees Celsius (102.4 degrees Fahrenheit), the highest level ever recorded in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>It was likely to be the first of several record-shattering temperatures, as the heat built mercilessly in London and across swaths of the country's Midlands and north. Forecasters said temperatures in parts of the country could surpass 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) later in the day.</p> <p>For all the heat-related disruptions on Monday in Britain — some <a href="#">runways melted, trains stopped running, museums closed</a> — Tuesday was shaping up to be an even more epic scorcher.</p> <p>The record in Surrey, set at 10:40 a.m., was quickly surpassed. About two hours later, the Met Office, Britain's national weather service, said the provisional temperature at Heathrow Airport had hit 40.2 Celsius (104.4 Fahrenheit). If confirmed, it would be the first time that the temperature in Britain had exceeded 40 degrees Celsius.</p> <p>And Britons, many living <a href="#">without air-conditioning</a>, had not gotten much relief overnight. Monday night was the warmest on record in Britain, <a href="#">according to the Met Office</a>. In some places, temperatures didn't fall below 25 Celsius (77 Fahrenheit).</p> <p>Unusual heat has caused misery in other parts of Europe as well. In France and Spain, firefighters have been battling wild fires that have gobbled up forest and brush and in some places, forced evacuations. On Tuesday, more than 2,000 firefighters were facing off against a blaze in the southwest that has forced 37,000 people from their homes this week.</p> <p>One fire official called the area "a real powder keg," as winds still fanned the flames even as some cool ocean air began to push the hot air away.</p> <p>In Britain, the second day of extraordinary heat means a second day of disruptions for a country that is not equipped for it. Public transportation, many offices and some schools are being affected. The government urged people to continue to work from home — a call that many heeded Tuesday — but for schools to stay open — a plea that some school districts had ignored on Monday, sending students home.</p> <p>Network Rail, which operates the country's rail system, issued a "do not travel" warning for trains that run through areas covered by a "red" warning issued by the Met Office. That covers a large section of the country, stretching from London north to Manchester and York. Several train companies said they planned to cancel all service running north from the capital.</p> <p>Trains are particularly affected by high heat because the infrastructure — rails and overhead wires — are not built to cope with extremely hot temperatures. Those that are still running are subject to speed restrictions. The London Underground, most of which does not have air conditioning, has also suspended some of its service.</p> <p>Amid all the sweltering, there was a promise of relief: Temperatures were forecast to plunge to the high 20s Celsius (low 80s Fahrenheit) by Wednesday.</p>
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HEADLINE	07/18 Gazprom: cannot guarantee gas supply
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/russias-gazprom-declares-force-majeure-gas-supplies-europe-2022-07-18/">https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/russias-gazprom-declares-force-majeure-gas-supplies-europe-2022-07-18/</a>
GIST	LONDON, July 18 (Reuters) - Russia's Gazprom has told customers in Europe it cannot guarantee gas supplies because of "extraordinary" circumstances, according to a letter seen by Reuters, upping the ante in an economic tit-for-tat with the West over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The Russian state gas monopoly said in a letter dated July 14 that it was retroactively declaring force majeure on supplies from June 14. The news comes as Nord Stream 1, the key pipeline delivering Russian gas to Germany and beyond, is undergoing 10 days of annual maintenance scheduled to conclude on Thursday.

The letter added to fears in Europe that Moscow may not restart the pipeline at the end of the maintenance period in retaliation for sanctions imposed on Russia over the war in Ukraine, heightening an energy crisis that risks tipping the region into recession.

Known as an "act of God" clause, force majeure is standard in business contracts and defines extreme circumstances that release a party from their legal obligations. The declaration does not necessarily mean that Gazprom will stop deliveries, rather that it should not be held responsible if it fails to meet contract terms.

Gazprom ([GAZP.MM](#)) did not respond to a request for comment.

Russian gas supplies have been declining via major routes for some months, including via Ukraine and Belarus as well as through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline under the Baltic Sea.

A trading source, asking not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the issue, said the force majeure concerned supplies through Nord Stream 1.

"This sounds like a first hint that the gas supplies via NS1 will possibly not resume after the 10-day maintenance has ended," said Hans van Cleef, senior energy economist at ABN Amro.

"Depending on what 'extraordinary' circumstances have in mind in order to declare the force majeure, and whether these issues are technical or more political, it could mean the next step in escalation between Russia and Europe/Germany," he added.

Uniper, Germany's biggest importer of Russian gas, was among the customers that said it had received a letter, and that it had formally rejected the claim as unjustified.

RWE ([RWE.G.DE](#)), Germany's largest power producer and another importer of Russian gas, also said it has received a force majeure notice.

"Please understand that we cannot comment on its details or our legal opinion," the company said.

#### TURBINE DELAY

Gazprom cut Nord Stream 1 capacity to 40% on June 14, the date that Gazprom said in the letter to buyers would be the start of the force majeure.

Gazprom blamed sanctions for that reduction, citing the delay in the return of a gas turbine from maintenance in Canada by equipment supplier Siemens Energy ([ENR1n.DE](#)).

Canada sent the turbine for the pipeline to Germany by plane on July 17 after repair work had been completed, Kommersant newspaper reported on Monday, citing people familiar with the situation.

It will take another five to seven days for the turbine to reach Russia, the report said, provided there are no problems with logistics and customs. Germany's economy ministry said on Monday it could not provide details of the turbine's whereabouts.

But a spokesperson for the ministry said it was a replacement part that was meant to be used only from September, meaning its absence could not be the real reason for the fall-off in gas flows prior to the maintenance.

	<p>Austrian oil and gas group OMV (<a href="#">OMVV.VI</a>), however, said on Monday it expected gas deliveries from Russia through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to resume as planned after the outage.</p> <p>"Gazprom's motivations are uncertain, but the declaration will not have a material impact on the current landscape," said Zongqiang Luo, gas analyst at consultancy Rystad Energy.</p> <p>The European Union, which has imposed sanctions on Moscow, aims to stop using Russian fossil fuels by 2027 but wants supplies to continue for now as it develops alternative sources.</p> <p>"Russia continues to use natural gas as a political and economic weapon," said White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre, adding that the Biden administration continues to work to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian fossil fuels. "Russia's energy coercion has put pressure on energy markets, raised prices for consumers and threatened global energy security."</p> <p>For Moscow and for Gazprom, the energy flows are a vital revenue stream as Western sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which the Kremlin terms a "special military operation," have strained Russian finances.</p> <p>According to the Russian Finance Ministry, the federal budget received 6.4 trillion roubles (\$114.29 billion) from oil and gas sales in the first half of the year. This compares with a planned 9.5 trillion roubles for the whole of 2022.</p> <p>The grace period for payments on two of Gazprom's international bonds expires on July 19, and if foreign creditors are not paid by then the company will be technically in default.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Russia struggling to protect tanks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/russia-ukraine-usa/2022/07/18/id/1079339/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/russia-ukraine-usa/2022/07/18/id/1079339/</a>
GIST	<p>Russia has failed to <a href="#">effectively shield its tanks</a> from weapons sent to Ukraine from the United States, leading to significant losses in its wartime effort, according to The Moscow Times, an English-language, Russia-based online publication.</p> <p>Citing <a href="#">the Times' reporting</a>, the Russian troops have also struggled to maximize certain strategic initiatives against Ukraine.</p> <p>"Tanks are supposed to fight as part of combined formations; but in terms of how they've been tactically used, Russia hasn't done that effectively," said Nick Reynolds, a military expert at London's Royal United Services Institute.</p> <p>When Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, some military analysts predicted a quick takeover of the neighboring country. But as the ongoing war concludes its fifth full month, "weaknesses <a href="#">in the Kremlin's military</a> are becoming more apparent," says the Times.</p> <p>As a result, Russia has had to account for the unexpected volume of losses of human personnel and military weaponry.</p> <p>For example, back in April, the Center of Strategic and International Studies (<a href="#">CSIS</a>) estimated that Russia had more than 2,800 military tanks at its immediate disposal, with another 10,000 in storage.</p> <p>The <a href="#">T-90M battle tank</a> comprised a large share of the tank fleet, the highest-quality arsenal in Putin's possession, according to the Times. The T-90Ms feature a multi-channel sighting system, a turret with more armor plating, and a prodigiously powerful main gun.</p> <p>However, Russia has yet to assert its dominance over Ukraine, despite the supposed technological advantages with tanks.</p>

	<p>Ukraine's <a href="#">Ministry of Defense</a> estimates that Russia <a href="#">has lost 1,687 tanks</a> since the onset of the war. There are also reports of significant losses to Russian aircraft, artillery systems, and other military-grade vehicles.</p> <p>On Sunday, United Kingdom Defence Chief Sir Tony Radakin said that declining morale among Russian troops has led to military leaders being unable to sufficiently match people to weapons.</p> <p>Consequently, Russia's military recruiters have turned to the country's expansive rural areas to attract more talent.</p> <p>It's a time-consuming process, though.</p> <p>"The overall force is [still] struggling. They're struggling in terms of their numbers, but they're especially struggling in terms of their morale," Radakin said.</p> <p>"Wagner [a Russian military company] are lowering recruitment standards, hiring convicts and formerly blacklisted individuals. Very limited training is made available to new recruits," the British Ministry of Defence said Monday.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Putin: sanctions causing problems</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/russia-sanctions-putin/2022/07/18/id/1079302/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/russia-sanctions-putin/2022/07/18/id/1079302/</a>
GIST	<p>Russian President Vladimir Putin admitted Monday that Western sanctions on his country are causing "colossal" high-tech issues in Russia's high-tech industry, the Daily Mail reports.</p> <p>Putin said that it was impossible to cut Russia off from the rest of the world, and that sanctions imposed by Western countries would not turn the clock back on Russia's development.</p> <p>Since invading Ukraine on Feb. 24, Russia has been hit with a barrage of Western sanctions, designed to isolate it from the global economy, that have deprived it of access to goods, including commercial electronics, semiconductors, and aircraft parts.</p> <p>"Not just restrictions but the almost-complete closure of access to foreign high-tech products is being deliberately, intentionally used against our country," Putin said, speaking at a video conference with government figures.</p> <p>"It is clear that this is a huge challenge for our country, but ... we are not going to give up and stay in a state of disarray or, as some of our 'well-wishers' predict, go back decades. Of course not," he said.</p> <p>Putin said Russia would have to develop its own domestic technology and technology firms.</p> <p>"This is a huge challenge for our country," Putin said. "Realizing the colossal amount of difficulties we are facing, we will look for new solutions in an energetic and competent manner.</p> <p>"Clearly, we cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, but we won't. In today's world, you can't just, you know, circle everything with a compass and put up a huge fence, it's just not possible."</p> <p>Major tech companies such as Apple, Microsoft, and Intel either suspended their Russian operations or have left the country since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It has left Russia with few alternatives from the inside.</p> <p>Putin noted that many of Russia's growing tech firms, such as online retailer Ozon or internet company Yandex, have been hurt without access to Western financing.</p>

Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said support for the Russian technology sector was a priority, but that every ruble of state support should be accompanied by at least three rubles of private investment.

"I very much look forward to detailed proposals from both the finance ministry and the Bank of Russia," Putin said.

Putin's admission comes as EU leaders meet in Russia to discuss even more sanctions on Russia as well as more aid for Ukraine.

EU foreign ministers were zooming in Monday on tightening the extensive package of sanctions on Russia and looking at ways to add a ban on gold exports in hopes that the measures might finally start to have a decisive impact on the war in Ukraine.

The EU ministers also made a commitment to add another 500 million euros in military aid to Ukraine's war chest to beef up the defense of the nation.

On restrictive measures, EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell said that at the moment "the most important thing is a ban on Russian gold," which is Moscow's second-largest export industry after energy."

The Group of Seven leading industrial nations last month already committed to a gold ban, arguing that Russia has used its gold to back up its currency to circumvent the impact of several rounds of sanctions that nations around the world had already imposed on Moscow after its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

The 27 EU ministers will also assess how they can tighten controls on exports of high technology to Russia for a possible decision later in the week.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 Russia pounds Ukraine, Putin in Tehran</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-iran-550e22a03995f63ff9e75144e64dd53a">https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-iran-550e22a03995f63ff9e75144e64dd53a</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian cruise missiles struck villages around southern Ukraine's port city of Odesa early Tuesday, hitting houses, a school and a community center as Russian President Vladimir Putin was in Iran to discuss a U.N.-backed proposal to unblock exports of Ukrainian grain.</p> <p>Russian forces fired seven Kalibr cruise missiles at the Odesa region. The Russian Defense Ministry said strikes on the village of Bilenke had a legitimate military goal and "destroyed depots of ammunition for weapons supplied by the United States and European countries."</p> <p>A local official disputed Moscow's claim and said six people were wounded.</p> <p>"These strikes on peaceful people have one goal — to intimidate the population and the authorities and keep them in constant tension," Serhiy Bratchuk, the speaker of the Odesa regional government, told Ukrainian television.</p> <p>The Russian military in recent weeks has targeted Odesa and parts of southern Ukraine where its troops captured cities earlier in the war amid indications that Ukraine was planning counterattacks to retake Russian-occupied areas.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces on the ground in eastern Ukraine are fighting to hold onto the declining territory under their control.</p> <p>At least two civilians were killed and 15 more were wounded by Russian shelling across the country over the past 24 hours, Ukraine's presidential office said in a morning update.</p>



“There remains a high level of threat of missile strikes throughout the territory of Ukraine,” said Oleksandr Shtupun, spokesman of the General Staff of the Ukrainian armed forces.

In eastern Ukraine’s Donetsk province, which has been cut off from gas supplies and in part from water and power, one person was killed and two more wounded.

“The infrastructure of the cities is being methodically destroyed by missile strikes, and the civilian population, cut off from bare necessities, suffers the most,” Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said in televised remarks.

Kyrylenko said four Russian strikes were carried out on the city of Kramatorsk. He urged civilians to evacuate. Some residents heeded the warning and loaded what belongings they could carry into a bus early Tuesday to await evacuation.

The missile strikes came as the British military said it believes Russia is facing “increasingly acute” problems in keeping up its troop strength in its grinding war of attrition that began with the Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

The British Defense Ministry in a Tuesday morning assessment said that Russia “has struggled to sustain effective offensive combat power since the start of the invasion, and this problem is likely becoming increasingly acute” as Moscow seeks to conquer the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

The British military added: “While Russia may still make further territorial gains, their operational tempo and rate of advance is likely to be very slow without a significant operational pause for reorganization and refit.”

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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Homebuilder sentiment historic plunge</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/18/homebuilder-sentiment-takes-historic-plunge-in-july.html">https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/18/homebuilder-sentiment-takes-historic-plunge-in-july.html</a>
GIST	<p>Confidence among builders in the nation’s single-family housing market fell in July to the lowest level since the start of the pandemic.</p> <p>The National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index, a survey designed to gauge market conditions, found builder sentiment dropped 12 points to 55. That marked the largest single-month drop in the survey’s 37-year history with the exception of April 2020, when the reading plummeted 42 points to 30 after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Any rating above 50 on the index is still considered positive, but sentiment has now fallen 24 points since March, when mortgage rates began moving higher. The average rate on the 30-year fixed mortgage has nearly doubled since January and is now hovering just below 6%.</p> <p>Sentiment stood at 80 in July of last year after hitting a record high of 90 in November 2020, when the pandemic sparked a rash of homebuying among people looking for more space in less urban areas. Now, concerns about inflation and recession are among the factors taking a toll on builder sentiment.</p> <p>Of the index’s three components, builder sentiment about current sales conditions dropped 12 points to 64, while sales expectations for the next six months fell 11 points to 50 and sentiment about buyer traffic declined 11 points to 37. That last component is now solidly in negative territory.</p> <p>“Affordability is the greatest challenge facing the housing market,” said Robert Dietz, NAHB’s chief economist. “Significant segments of the home buying population are priced out of the market.”</p> <p>Some major publicly traded homebuilders addressed affordability in their latest earnings releases, saying they would work with buyers to accommodate tightening budgets. But the price of a newly built home in May was \$449,000, up 15% from a year ago. That may change in the coming months.</p>

	<p>In another sign of a softening market, 13% of builders in the HMI survey reported reducing home prices in the past month to bolster sales or limit cancellations, according to Jerry Konter, NAHB chairman and a homebuilder in Savannah, Georgia.</p> <p>“Production bottlenecks, rising home building costs and high inflation are causing many builders to halt construction because the cost of land, construction and financing exceeds the market value of the home,” Konter said.</p> <p>In the Northeast, builder sentiment on a three-month moving average fell 6 points to 65. In the Midwest, sentiment dropped 4 points to 52, and sentiment in the South fell 8 points to 70. The West saw the largest decline, falling 12 points to 62.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/18 CDC stops sharing cruise ships Covid data</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/07/18/cdc-stops-sharing-cruise-covid-data/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/07/18/cdc-stops-sharing-cruise-covid-data/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stopped reporting coronavirus levels for cruise ships in U.S. waters, ending a pandemic-era program that allowed the public to monitor the spread of the virus at sea.</p> <p>A notice posted on the CDC <a href="#">website</a> for cruise travel said the program ended Monday. A sortable color-coded chart and spreadsheet that detailed the level of spread on ships is no longer viewable on the webpage, the agency confirmed.</p> <p>“CDC has determined that the cruise industry has access to the necessary tools (e.g., cruise-specific recommendations and guidance, vaccinations, testing instruments, treatment modalities, and non-pharmaceutical interventions) to prevent and mitigate COVID-19 on board,” CDC spokeswoman Kristen Nordlund said in an email.</p> <p>A statement posted in an FAQ section of the CDC’s cruise travel page says the agency ended the program because it “depended upon each cruise line having the same COVID-19 screening testing standards, which may now vary among cruise lines.” The site says cruise lines will continue to report coronavirus cases to the agency.</p> <p>Without publicly available coronavirus data, the CDC’s page for cruise travel says customers “have the option of contacting their cruise line directly regarding outbreaks occurring on board their ship.”</p> <p>In January, the public health agency turned the mandatory rules that cruise lines had to follow during much of the pandemic <a href="#">into recommendations</a> for a program in which they could opt in. Those rules included testing and vaccination requirements for passengers and crew.</p> <p>Nordlund said cruise lines “will determine their own specific COVID-19-related requirements for cruise travel, as well as safety measures and protocols for passengers traveling on board based on CDC recommendations for reducing the risk of COVID-19.”</p> <p>Royal Caribbean requires all travelers 12 years old or older to be vaccinated and present a negative test result no more than two days before boarding. On Carnival cruises, guests 2 years old and over must present a negative test taken no more than 72 hours; guests must also be vaccinated or obtain a vaccine exemption from the company.</p> <p>Earlier this month, Norwegian Cruise Line dropped its testing requirement. All guests 12 years old and over are still required to be vaccinated.</p> <p>Anne Madison, a spokesperson for Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), said the association expects to receive new guidance from the CDC later this week.</p>



	<p>“We look forward to reviewing the details, which we understand will be posted on the CDC website in the coming days,” Madison said in an email. “This is an important step forward in the CDC aligning the guidelines for cruise with those it has established for other travel, hospitality and entertainment sectors.”</p> <p>As part of its program, the CDC displayed a list of the vaccination status and color status — indicating whether there are reported coronavirus cases on board — of participating cruise ships. As of Wednesday, 93 of the 94 ships reporting coronavirus data to the CDC were under observation because they met the threshold for investigation (cases in 0.3 percent of total crew and passengers).</p> <p>In late March, the <a href="#">CDC dropped its coronavirus warning for cruises</a>. It had included notices for cruise ships since March 2020, when cruise lines stopped sailing from U.S. waters for more than a year.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Seattle schools students' mental health gap</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/this-is-how-far-seattle-schools-are-from-meeting-students-mental-health-demands/">https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/this-is-how-far-seattle-schools-are-from-meeting-students-mental-health-demands/</a>
GIST	<p>Since the start of school last year, Seattle students have urged administrators to hire more mental health specialists to help them feel safer and more supported in their learning environments.</p> <p>But districts here in Washington and nationwide have struggled to hire enough school psychologists, counselors, and social workers — even as student mental health needs have become more apparent in the wake of school shootings and <a href="#">pandemic-related stresses</a>.</p> <p>In Seattle, students have staged rallies and protests for stronger COVID-19 protocols, endured school closures because of threats of violence and teacher sickouts, and returned temporarily to remote learning in a few cases because of coronavirus spikes.</p> <p>“It’s easy to see that we all need more mental health support in all of our schools,” said Jensen Perdue, a counselor at Ingraham High School. “It’s hard to get into the prevention mode when our case loads are so high and mental health needs are so high and they [students] aren’t able to get long-term mental health care pretty much anywhere.”</p> <p>The <a href="#">Seattle Student Union</a>, a newly formed youth activism group, <a href="#">led the charge</a> this past academic year, calling for more mental health specialists — specifically asking for at least one counselor per every 200 students. That’s a tighter ratio than the one recommended by the <a href="#">American School Counselor Association</a>, <a href="#">which suggests</a> one counselor per 250 students.</p> <p>Currently, Seattle Schools is not close to either. It has <a href="#">one counselor per 375 students</a>, and it would take about \$16.6 million to hire enough counselors to meet student demands, said Jolynn Berge, assistant superintendent for business and finance.</p> <p>Seattle Schools expects a staff of 133 school counselors in the fall, 130 of whom are funded by the state, according to district data. The district would need to hire 119 more counselors or social workers to meet the threshold set by student activists, Berge said.</p> <p>The student union has also asked SPS to hire more mental health experts of color. That’s been a challenge because there isn’t much diversity in the field, Berge said.</p> <p>While the district won’t be able to meet the students’ requests, they are looking for ways to respond to their mental health needs.</p> <p>One is to replicate a program that has been successful in recruiting teachers of color, Berge said, such as <a href="#">the Academy for Rising Educators</a> (ARE), a certification program focused on training a more diverse group of educators that comes with financial support.</p>

The district now employs [family support workers](#) who connect families with community resources and provide referrals for those needing medical, social, or emotional counseling, tutoring, and mentoring services. The pool of family support workers is more diverse than the mental health specialists at SPS, Berge said, and one idea is to create a program to train these family support workers to become school counselors or social workers.

[School counselors](#) focus on three areas: academic counseling, social-emotional learning, and college and career readiness, said Jensen Perdue, a counselor at Ingraham High School.

Counselors are trained in mental health because it affects every student in some capacity, said Perdue, who's been a counselor for seven years. She's long talked to students who are experiencing anxiety and depression, but this year she said the needs were greater.

"I had plenty of students come up to me and straight-up ask how to get a therapist," she said. "That's new for me — very few would go right out and say it."

The waitlists for mental health services were "astronomical," Perdue said, and there were even waitlists to get in the referral lines.

School social workers are among the smaller group of mental health experts in Seattle Schools. The next school year, the state will fund about 10 of the district's 21 social workers.

[Social workers](#) assist and provide support with mental health and behavioral concerns, through individual or group counseling sessions. They also provide academic support in the classroom.

"In general, my job is to kind of remove those barriers that disconnect the kids from people or learning in school," said Julie Sullenszino, a social worker at Dearborn Park Elementary. "I'm kind of always looking at what mental health aspects might be percolating in a young student — anxiety, depression — some of those emerge and some of those are just a gap in skills."

For example, if a kid is having behavioral issues that would normally result in discipline, social workers usually step in first, Sullenszino said.

Educators have seen upticks in behavioral problems, especially among younger students who lost social skills or didn't have the time to learn them, or failed to learn how to interact in a classroom setting.

Seattle Schools hired additional social workers at 12 elementary schools this past year using federal pandemic assistance, according to district officials. The district placed these social workers at schools that didn't have that kind of support staff previously. Now, about 3,500 more elementary students are receiving mental health services, officials estimate.

All of Seattle's 62 elementary schools have at least a part-time counselor or social worker, officials said. All middle and high schools have full-time counselors. The district also partners with 29 King County-based health centers and contracts with 17 community agencies to offer mental health supports.

SPS also employs psychologists, who work with a smaller population of students.

Their main role is to evaluate students who have [Individualized Education Plans](#), Berge said. IEPs are put together by various school officials for students who have disabilities and require special-education services.

Youth with IEPs are required to have a reevaluation every three years, Berge said, and these take up the bulk of a school psychologist's time. It's a reason why psychologists are paid, in part, through special-education funds — the program Seattle Schools [spends the most money on](#) outside of general education.

	<p>Rather than being assigned to specific schools like counselors and social workers, psychologists are assigned to students, Berge said.</p> <p>Seattle Schools is slated to have 62 psychologists on staff in the fall, and about three of those are funded by the state, according to district data. The 62 psychologists cost just over \$11 million, Berge said.</p> <p>School nurses have <a href="#">also felt the weight of the mental health crises</a> this past school year. The district will have about 87 nurses on staff in the fall, and the state funds about 28 of the positions.</p> <p>State funding for psychologists, school counselors, social workers, and nurses has increased since the 2021-22 school year. But Berge says mental health services and supports go beyond just the experts.</p> <p>“I think all of our school staff are addressing mental health needs every day,” Berge said. “We have so many students in crisis.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Russia sending teachers to Ukraine</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/18/russia-teachers-ukraine-rewrite-history/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/18/russia-teachers-ukraine-rewrite-history/</a>
GIST	<p>RIGA, Latvia — Russia has promised hundreds of teachers big money to go to occupied Ukraine and give students there a “corrected” education — with Russia’s take on Ukraine’s history — in the coming school year.</p> <p>For some teachers in Chuvashia, a republic about 400 miles east of Moscow, the offer seemed tempting. The average monthly salary in the region is around \$550, but the prospective salary posted by a school director on a Chuvashia teachers’ chat group was for more than \$2,900 a month.</p> <p>“Urgent,” his June 17 message said. “Teachers needed for [Zaporizhzhia] and Kherson regions for the summer period. 8600 rubles a day. The job is to prepare schools for the new school year. Transportation there and back — free. Accommodation and food — under discussion.”</p> <p>An hour later, the director added: “Dear teachers, is there anyone else who wishes to help colleagues? It is safe in those regions. Please respond fast.” Both solicitations were shared with The Washington Post by the Alliance of Teachers, an independent group in Russia.</p> <p>The pay is so lucrative that one of the group’s members briefly considered responding before his administrator warned him that he would be crazy to go.</p> <p>“Everyone understands everything. These trips will not result in anything good,” said the teacher, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of fears of retaliation.</p> <p>Moscow is carrying out an intense Russification effort in occupied regions, one that appears designed to quash Ukrainians’ sense of history, nationhood and even their language. Targeting what children learn is a key strategy. Ukrainian education “must be corrected,” Russian Education Minister Sergei Kravtsov said at a June 28 meeting of President Vladimir Putin’s United Russia party.</p> <p>Yet the Kremlin’s effort extends far beyond the schools. It already has blocked Ukraine’s cellphone network and media in areas it controls, while broadcasting Russian state propaganda about its “denazification” of the country. It has torn down Ukrainian city signs and replaced them with Russian ones. And under a Putin decree, Moscow is trying to get Ukrainians throughout the country to sign up for Russian passports.</p> <p>Referendums are planned for September on occupied areas “joining” Russia. The Kremlin also has foreshadowed possible votes on making Russian the official language of Ukraine.</p>

Several weeks ago, Russia set up civil registry offices in Kherson and Melitopol, where Ukrainians can register newborn babies “in accordance with Russian law,” get Russian documents and apply for welfare payments.

Nearly 250 teachers, including 57 from the republic of Dagestan in southern Russia, signed up to go to Ukraine, according to a list on the Dagestan Ministry of Education website that no longer is visible. Their destinations include the Moscow-backed separatist regions of Luhansk and Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. The ministry advertised a massive pay boost — 8,000 rubles a day, about \$137, on top of teachers’ existing teaching salaries.

In the city of Izhevsk, Georgy Grigoriyev signed up because of the salary. He is not concerned about the potential dangers and plans to go for at least a year. “Then probably I will stay there,” he said. “I’ll probably buy an apartment there. I have nothing to lose.” He teaches Russian language and literature as well as chemistry and biology.

“They promise very good salaries and accommodation,” Grigoriyev explained in a phone interview. “And I thought, ‘Why not?’ I’m divorced, my children are grown-ups, so I might as well work there, especially for such a good salary.”

Another teacher, who lives in the Astrakhan region and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said by phone that he had registered to teach in Ukraine “because I want to be useful there. I believe that the life in those regions is very hard, and I want to help people there.”

The Education Ministry’s offices in Moscow and Dagestan did not respond to questions from The Post, but in late June the ministry told the government newspaper Rossiskaya Gazeta that it was introducing “high-quality Russian standards so that schools can work properly.” Independent Russian media Caucasian Knot quoted a Dagestan ministry spokesman saying the order to recruit teachers came on the evening of July 6 and gave it just two days to get answers.

Kravtsov, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Putin’s Russification project, flew in mid-June to Melitopol and stressed Moscow’s determination to teach Ukrainian children the Russian version of the nations’ histories.

“The key task is telling school students the whole truth, the truth about our fraternal peoples, about common achievements and victories,” he told Russian journalists in the occupied city. He said Russia would stay in the region “forever.”

Kravtsov was a Moscow math teacher in the 1990s before switching to academia and then government education agencies, where he moved swiftly up the ranks. He holds several degrees, though a lawmaker once accused him of plagiarism in earning one of those.

Several days after the head of Putin’s party announced this month that a “brigade” of student teachers had reached Ukraine, Kravtsov visited a city in the northeast and said the first batch of Russian textbooks, including language and history books, had arrived. Ukrainian children, he noted, must be educated in “traditions of friendship” with Russians. The result will be “our happy children.”

This push comes amid a major overhaul of Russia’s own education system, prompted largely by top security officials calling on schools to build a new “patriotic” generation. History textbooks are being revised to reflect Putin’s view that Ukraine was never a real state.

Starting in September, Russian teachers must hold new class sessions titled “Conversations About Important Things.” These must follow government guidelines on what children should learn about the war in Ukraine and current events — an approach reminiscent of the “politinformation” classes held in Soviet times. If the classes follow Putin’s lead, they will reflect his false claims that Ukraine committed “genocide” or that its government is made up of “Nazis” bent on attacking Russia.

Moscow's Russification of areas it occupies in Ukraine bears disturbing echoes of the Soviet era under Joseph Stalin when millions of people from annexed or subjugated regions were deported to Siberia and Central Asia. Russian workers were sent in to settle and assimilate many areas. The Baltic states and Central Asian nations such as Kazakhstan still have significant numbers of ethnic Russians, often a source of tension amid Moscow's frequent vows to "protect" all Russian speakers.

Kravtsov's education project is getting a boost from another Kremlin scheme pairing Russian cities with occupied Ukrainian cities and towns. St. Petersburg's governor, Alexander Beglov, flew in June to Mariupol, the Ukrainian port city heavily bombed by Russia, to sign a "twin city" agreement with Russia's proxies there. He announced he would pair his schools with ones in Mariupol and vowed to send in teams of teachers and government officials.

One teacher in St. Petersburg named Larisa, who opposes the war, believes going to teach in Ukraine would be morally repugnant because of the millions of people there who have been killed or displaced by Russia's attacks.

"Unfortunately, there will be teachers who will go to Ukraine to earn that cursed money," said Larisa, whom The Post is identifying only by first name due to fears she could be arrested or jailed. "I don't know how they will look into the mirror."

Daniil Ken, head of the Alliance of Teachers, said some regional governments deleted the recruitment offers from school chat groups as soon as local media reported them. He suspects the governments were concerned that teachers might complain about the low salaries paid in Russia, particularly in understaffed rural areas.

"People might start asking, 'Why are our teachers being sent there when we do not have enough teachers here?' " said Ken, who recently left Russia because of concerns over his safety.

Larisa expects history teachers to have the most difficult task: changing Ukrainian students' views of their country's past to fit Russian government demands.

"I don't think that this will be successful," she said. "Those who are dependent on you, under the threat of being killed or being punished, can pretend that they believe you. But in the bottom of their hearts, they won't believe you, and they will be waiting for any opportunity for revenge."

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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 Ukraine farmers latest target Russia strikes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/19/ukraine-farmers-grain-russia-airstrikes/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/19/ukraine-farmers-grain-russia-airstrikes/</a>
GIST	<p>PERVOMAIKE, Ukraine — "The fields are burning," the farmer yelled in a panic.</p> <p>He had been just days away from starting the harvest, but the Russian shelling came first — despite his modest farm's distance from Ukraine's southern front. In minutes, the flames threatened what was left of this year's grain crop.</p> <p>"That field was on fire. That one is burning. There it's burning," he said, giving only his first name, Viktor, as he paced back and forth on a patch of scorched earth. He pointed to neighboring plots of wheat as the rumble of outgoing artillery sounded in the distance. On the horizon, two more plumes of smoke rose.</p> <p>Fires are the latest scourge that Viktor and other farmers face in the Mykolaiv region. With the planting season delayed by fighting to retake the area from occupying Russian forces, they must now choose between harvesting near an active front line or abandoning their crop. After months of war and the financial strain of Russia's Black Sea blockade, a decision to let the wheat go could mean financial ruin.</p> <p>"People need to get their grain," said Viktor, a slight man of 57 years. "People must survive somehow."</p>

The havoc unleashed by the Russian invasion has prevented much of Ukraine's grain from reaching global markets this year, slashing the output of one of the world's largest producers and affecting food security worldwide. The country accounted for 10 percent of global wheat exports in 2021, according to the United Nations.

The flat steppe in the south — the feature that makes for such prime farmland — has only complicated the effort to oust Russian forces. Ukrainian fighters must maneuver through open fields with little natural camouflage and sparse hard cover.

In this section of the front line, the war remains a bloody stalemate. Ukrainian soldiers utilize what is left of the villages and tree lines during grueling artillery onslaughts. During daytime hours, their troop movements are limited by Russian drones used to track and correct outgoing artillery fire for maximum damage.

In Pervomaiske, only five miles from Russian military positions, waist-high grain waits in the fields. Ukrainian forces continue holding the town, which has been reduced mostly to rubble, amid the enemy's ongoing attacks with S-300 surface-to-air missiles and artillery.

That Russian shelling has grown increasingly chaotic and random as Ukrainian forces reinforce their positions and prepare for what is expected to be a counteroffensive. Farmers and Ukrainian soldiers in the area report new fires daily, which continue to destroy fields and farming equipment.

Two Ukrainian fighters based in Pervomaiske talked Saturday about the extra danger that the increased use of cluster bombs and explosives poses in sun-parched farm fields. The men were part of the Ukrainian army's 63rd Mechanized Brigade, the only presence left to extinguish the fires that result. The people who once lived in the villages fled long ago.

"We have to save the grain — in between shelling, our boys are running around to put out the flames," said Vadim Chornii, the brigade's deputy commander, whose forces have been fighting in the area since the war began in late February. He fears the Russians have shifted tactics, deliberately targeting farms to demoralize the region's remaining population and create an artificial famine to force Ukraine's capitulation.

The shelling has also destroyed critical agricultural infrastructure tied to the grain harvest. Damaged bridges and crater-pocked roads make it impossible to move grain out, while rail lines typically used to transport grain have stopped operating.

In the nearby village of Zasillya, recent fighting devastated a large flour mill and grain elevator used by farmers across the region. The facility's silos, which once held up to 30,000 tons of grain, were reduced to smoldering ashes. Inside one of the storage areas, which last weekend was still being targeted by the Russian military, golden wheat flowed into the burning red embers of what had been a 20-foot-tall mound of grain.

And at a farming depot less than two miles from Russian military positions, a blast shredded three large tractors and damaged half a dozen grain wagons. Shrapnel eviscerated the roof of a grain silo the size of a football field. Nearby, a farmer plowed a small field burned a day earlier — barely a hundred yards from two charred tanks almost hidden by hay bales.

Rustem Zhafarya owns the property and uses the facility to store and service equipment needed to harvest the 3,300 hectares (8,154 acres) he leases. He has lost more than a tenth of his crops to fires, on top of the hundreds of thousands of dollars he spent buying seed and fuel at the start of the planting season.

"We feed the world, but today everything is shut down. We're losing money," he said.



	<p>The region's few farmers who have escaped the shelling and fires still confront other perils. Cluster munitions used by both sides in the conflict have spread bomblets that are difficult to spot from inside the large harvesters cutting through knee-high wheat. Several farmers have already died after coming upon unexploded ordnance.</p> <p>"Of course, it's stressful," said Serhii Fomin, 60, stopping briefly as he drove a combine through one of Viktor's fields. "We must do it. Getting in the harvest is the most important thing right now."</p> <p>Fomin is a farmer from a neighboring village, who fled his home before harvesting a single grain from his own field. He is now part of a three-man crew helping Viktor.</p> <p>It was early afternoon as the massive machine he rode pushed forward. Following closely was a wagon collecting a mixture of grain and ash.</p> <p>The crew hopes to finish the field in coming days — if the fire and the fighting don't stop them first. Yet with grain storage facilities filling up, farmers like Viktor are unsure about what comes next for their grain.</p> <p>"I don't know what to do with it," he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Denver police fire into crowd injuring 5</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/akevd5/denver-cops-mass-shooting">https://www.vice.com/en/article/akevd5/denver-cops-mass-shooting</a>
GIST	<p>Police injured five people when they opened fire on a crowd in Denver's lively entertainment district after allegedly seeing a man attempt to grab a handgun from his waistband.</p> <p>The police shot into the crowd at 1:30 a.m. Sunday morning soon after showing up to deal with a group arguing in front of a bar. A witness then described to <a href="#">Denver 7 News</a> seeing the cops "randomly shoot into a crowd of people."</p> <p>"It was definitely a little traumatic to see that go down, to see police just randomly shooting into a crowd of people. It was just insane," he said. "I heard maybe six or seven shots. I look to my left and I saw a girl who was hit on the thigh and it hit an artery and she was gushing out blood."</p> <p>"I can attest that there was no one else who shot a gun but Denver police," they added. "I saw them draw their guns. They didn't assess the situation."</p> <p>Police said the suspect did not fire his weapon. The five victims, as well as the suspect who was also injured, are all expected to survive. Only the suspect and a woman remain in the hospital. Police have not confirmed if the injured were all struck by bullets shot by the officers, or if they were hit by ricochets or shrapnel.</p> <p>A <a href="#">witness told the Denver Post</a> that they did not see the suspect holding a weapon or hear any warnings issued by the officers.</p> <p>In a <a href="#">probable cause statement</a> released on Sunday night, Denver PD said police first came into contact with the suspect during an argument between two men outside a bar. Cops said the suspect "lifted up his hoody as though he was armed with a handgun." Police say they approached the man and he walked away but then say they saw him "reaching into his waistband or pocket in a motion consistent with pulling out a firearm." The officer interviewed for the statement said he was "in fear for his life."</p> <p>So three officers opened fire into the crowd.</p> <p>"After the shots were fired, The Denver Police Officers immediately began to render aid to Waddy and several other victims who were injured during the shooting," the document reads. The document does not indicate it was the police who fired the shots but the department confirmed three officers discharged their</p>

	<p>weapons. In the document the unnamed officer said he saw the suspect throw the weapon to the ground after being shot.</p> <p>Another witness who saw the cops firing upon the crowd told <a href="#">The Denver Post</a> “I’m pretty sure we would’ve been shot had we been standing in the wrong spot.”</p> <p>The suspect did not fire on police, he has yet to be charged but was arrested on menacing and weapons possession violations. The three officers who fired on the crowd have been put on leave, but their names have not been released.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 What experts know about ‘long Covid’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/what-experts-know-about-long-covid-and-who-gets-it/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/what-experts-know-about-long-covid-and-who-gets-it/</a>
GIST	<p>Most people who suffer from COVID-19 fully recover. Millions of others find complete healing to be frustratingly elusive, in what’s often referred to as long COVID.</p> <p>Symptoms range from pulmonary, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal or neurological problems to cognitive issues such as so-called brain fog. No single explanation, diagnosis or treatment can be applied to them. Colloquially known as long-haulers, these patients reflect the pandemic’s lasting on society and the economy.</p> <p><b>1. What is long COVID?</b></p> <p>There’s no universally accepted definition yet. According to the World Health Organization, people with what it calls “post COVID-19 condition” have symptoms usually three months after an initial bout of COVID that last for at least two months and can’t be explained by an alternative diagnosis.</p> <p>Symptoms may persist from the acute phase of the illness or appear after — even in a person who displayed no symptoms initially. They may also fluctuate.</p> <p>Other groups have proposed alternative definitions. The U.K.’s National Health Service, for example, suggests referring to symptoms that last more than four weeks as “ongoing symptomatic COVID,” and “post-COVID syndrome” if they persist for longer than 12 weeks and can’t be otherwise explained. Another definition may be needed for children.</p> <p><b>2. How often does it occur?</b></p> <p>It’s too soon to say. The lack of a standard definition and variables such as what group is being studied and when the data were collected can lead to widely different results. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A report in May from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found about 1 in 5 adults between 18 and 64 years old had a health problem that might be attributable to a previous COVID infection.</li> <li>● A study in July that accounted for pre-infection symptoms in a nationally representative sample of Americans in the first year of the pandemic found that 23% experience at least one symptom that emerges around the time of infection and lasts for more than 12 weeks.</li> <li>● Another large study published last year, using data from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, estimated that about 7% of people had at least one symptom of long COVID six months after their infection.</li> </ul> <p>The incidence beyond the first 12 weeks of illness was 4.1% among those never hospitalized for COVID, 16% among those who were hospitalized and 23% among patients who were admitted to intensive care. The study also found differences in symptoms by age, race, sex and baseline health status.</p> <p>Other studies have found the likelihood of long COVID is greater among women, the middle-aged and the obese.</p> <p><b>3. What are the post-COVID symptoms?</b></p>

Tiredness and shortness of breath are commonly reported as well as brain fog — difficulty with concentration or memory. Other prolonged symptoms include fever, cough, palpitations or pain in the chest, joints, muscles or abdomen. Neurological symptoms include headaches, disturbed sleep, tingling or numbness, or dizziness. Digestive issues can cover nausea, diarrhea or reduced appetite. Some people report a diminution of the sense of taste or smell, tinnitus, earaches or a sore throat. Depression or anxiety also can occur.

#### **4. Do variants carry different long COVID risks?**

It appears so, though identifying them is complicated by other factors, such as prior COVID immunizations and infections. For example, the U.K.'s Office for National Statistics found in May that the odds of reporting fatigue, shortness of breath, difficulty concentrating and other persistent symptoms were 50% lower following infections likely caused by the omicron BA.1 variant than those likely caused by the delta strain. The difference was only found among adults who were double-vaccinated when infected. Among those who'd had three shots, the difference wasn't statistically significant. Among triple-vaccinated adults, however, the odds of reporting long COVID were higher following infection with the omicron BA.2 variant than the BA.1 variant, the analysis found.

#### **5. What causes it?**

Some health problems are well understood, others aren't. For instance, survivors can experience problems as a result of:

- the direct effect of the virus on organs and tissues
- the propensity of COVID to cause bleeding and clots that can restrict or block blood vessels including in the lung, which can cause a pulmonary embolism
- excessive inflammation by the immune system
- the body's failure to properly repair injured lungs and other organs, leading to the formation of scar tissue
- a lack of oxygen in the blood that injures the brain, lungs and other organs
- an imbalance in the microorganisms inhabiting the gastrointestinal tract
- lifesaving treatment, including the use of mechanical ventilation, corticosteroids, sedatives and painkillers administered in intensive care.

In a study published in January, scientists at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the University of Washington in Seattle found the risk of long COVID is increased by multiple early factors, including antibodies directed against their own tissues or organs known as autoantibodies, and a resurgence of the Epstein-Barr virus. Based on what's been observed with other viral diseases and research so far, other scientists speculate that different biological and genetic factors may be driving symptoms, none of which are mutually exclusive. These may include:

- chronic, systemic inflammation
- immune dysregulation, such as when the body's immune system overreacts or underreacts to a foreign invader
- interactions with the host microbiome, or microorganisms living in the body
- problems with the autonomic nervous system
- the persistence of viral particles or remnants in the body.

#### **6. Is COVID-19 definitely to blame for these symptoms?**

Not necessarily. Some symptoms might occur by chance or be triggered by stress or environmental factors such as allergens, while some preexisting conditions, such as diabetes, might have gone undiagnosed until COVID prompted medical attention.

Social restrictions, lockdowns, school and business closures, loss of livelihood, decreases in economic activity and shifting priorities of governments all have the potential to substantially affect mental health, according to a study that appeared Oct. 8 in the *Lancet*. It found the pandemic has resulted in an extra 53.2 million cases of major depressive disorder and an extra 76.2 million cases of anxiety disorders globally.

Diagnostic uncertainties have sometimes led to what patients describe as “medical gaslighting” by health professionals who don't take their complaints seriously, especially if the patient is a woman.

## **7. Do vaccines help prevent it?**

In a way, in that vaccination is the most effective tool to reduce the risk of getting infected by SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID, in the first place and it mitigates the likelihood of becoming severely ill.

A U.K. study found receiving a second dose of a coronavirus vaccine at least two weeks before an infection was associated with a 41% decrease in the odds of self-reported long COVID at least 12 weeks later. Data from Israel support the finding, though a larger study of some 13 million users of the U.S. Veterans Health Administration system in May found vaccination is associated with only a 15.7% reduction in the risk of long COVID.

## **8. How serious is it?**

Most long COVID symptoms don't seem to be life-threatening, but things like shortness of breath or fatigue can be disabling. For some COVID survivors, the infection may damage vital organs and exacerbate other diseases, the effects of which may not become apparent for months, like a ticking time bomb. Some of the conditions that may manifest later include cardiac arrest, stroke, heart failure, pulmonary embolism, myocarditis and chronic kidney disease.

Doctors have also noted an uptick in cases of diabetes linked to COVID. A study in February based on the veterans database in the U.S. found the virus may significantly increase a person's risk of heart disease for at least a year after recovery — even if the person wasn't hospitalized. Other studies from the U.S., U.K. and Germany showed that people who were hospitalized for COVID have an increased risk of being readmitted or dying 6 to 12 months later.

## **9. Do people recover from long COVID?**

The health trajectories of COVID survivors vary widely — from a complete resolution and a return to previous level of health in most people, to needing lung transplants in a small minority.

A U.K. study of hospitalized patients published in January found that a year after discharge, fewer than 3 in 10 patients reported feeling fully recovered. It's possible the use of treatments for COVID, including monoclonal antibody therapies and antiviral medications, reduces the likelihood of long COVID, though this hasn't been demonstrated. There is emerging evidence that multidisciplinary rehabilitation services can improve a patient's prospects of recovery.

## **10. What are the broader implications?**

The disability attributable to long COVID could account for as much as 30% of the pandemic's health burden, researchers at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine estimated. An uptick in treatments for depression, anxiety and pain has stoked concern of a spike in suicides and opioid overdoses. Surveys of long COVID sufferers indicate the condition is leading to reduced work schedules and absenteeism, which has implications for labor productivity.

With more than 560 million confirmed infections worldwide as of mid-2022, even a small share with long-term disability could have enormous social and economic consequences.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office said in a March 2 report that long COVID could affect the broader U.S. economy through decreased labor participation and an increased need for use of Social Security disability insurance or other publicly subsidized insurance.

## **11. Do other pathogens cause prolonged illness?**

Yes, scientists say it's actually an expected phenomenon. For example, post-viral syndromes can occur after the common cold, influenza, HIV, infectious mononucleosis, measles, Ebola and hepatitis B. Diabetes and other long-term consequences were observed in survivors of severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, which is caused by a related coronavirus.

A Canadian study identified 21 health care workers from Toronto who had post-viral symptoms for as long as three years after catching SARS in 2003 and were unable to return to their usual work. Some people who were hospitalized with SARS in Hong Kong had impaired lung function two years later, a study of 55 patients published in 2010 found. Still, it's not known yet whether the lessons of SARS are applicable to COVID-19.

Long COVID shares characteristics with many other long-term health conditions, including chronic fatigue syndrome and a blood-circulation disorder known as POTS. Studies into the drivers of long COVID could improve understanding of the causes of these conditions also.

## 12. What is being done?

In the U.S., the National Institutes of Health was allocated \$1.15 billion in funding to support research into the long-term effects of COVID. The studies hopes to get at issues such as the underlying biological causes and how they might be treated and prevented.

Some researchers are pressing governments to focus attention on potential long-term organ damage. For example, researchers have shown the virus can infect insulin-producing pancreatic tissue, potentially triggering diabetes that in some cases persists beyond the acute infection. That's prompted Australia's Monash University and King's College London to create a global registry for studying "new onset" diabetes.

Some long haulers have reported feeling better after receiving a COVID vaccination, prompting researchers to examine the phenomenon and whether vaccines can offer clues to treatment. Avindra Nath, clinical director of the U.S. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, said vaccines, including for flu, have been known to help patients with chronic fatigue, but relief has almost always been temporary.

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HEADLINE	07/18 Russia turns to criminal mercenaries
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2022-07-18/russias-mercenary-group-hiring-criminals-to-prepare-for-new-role-in-ukraine">https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2022-07-18/russias-mercenary-group-hiring-criminals-to-prepare-for-new-role-in-ukraine</a>
GIST	<p>Russia's Wagner Group has begun hiring criminals and other previously undesirable personnel to bolster its dwindling numbers ahead of taking on a central role in the <a href="#">Kremlin's new offensive in Ukraine</a>, according to Western intelligence.</p> <p>The prolific private military contractor firm is "lowering recruitment standards, hiring convicts and formerly blacklisted individuals" and providing them with "very limited training," the U.K. Defense Ministry's military intelligence concludes in a new assessment. The group has reinforced front-line forces in recent weeks and taken heavy casualties.</p> <p>"This will highly likely impact on the future operational effectiveness of the group and reduce its value as a prop to the regular Russian forces," according to the assessment.</p> <p>Russian President Vladimir Putin first ordered the private firm in March to <a href="#">withdraw from prior operations in Africa and Syria</a> to reinforce troops in Ukraine that met surprisingly deadly resistance from local forces. After completing an "operational pause" of his offensive in recent days, Putin likely expects the Wagner Group will grant Russia a new advantage even as the disparity among pro-Kremlin forces on the battlefield appears to be causing new problems.</p> <p>"Wagner head, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, has recently been made a Hero of the Russian Federation for Wagner's performance in Luhansk," the defense ministry states, citing one of the two oblasts that compose the Donbas, the focus of Russia's latest offensive. "This, at a time when a number of very senior Russian military commanders are being replaced, is likely to exacerbate grievances between the military and Wagner."</p>

“It is also likely to impact negatively on Russian military morale,” it concludes.

The damning assessment comes as forces loyal to Moscow plan to escalate operations in the Donbas while continuing to target civilian centers across Ukraine from afar. On Saturday, they conducted limited ground attacks on Donetsk, the other oblast in the Donbas, according to the Institute for the Study of War, which has fastidiously documented Russia’s battlefield movements since its invasion.

“The end of the Russian operational pause is unlikely to create a massive new wave of ground assaults across multiple axes of advance despite Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu’s public order for exactly that,” the institute writes in a new analysis note.

“The Russian Ministry of Defense notably did not claim any new territorial gains on July 17,” the institute stated, adding that it predicts “the end of the operational pause will be characterized by a fluctuating and staggered resumption of ground offensives.”

It adds that Russia appears to be “undertaking long-term force regeneration efforts that would allow the Kremlin to rebuild the badly damaged Russian military and/or sustain a long war in Ukraine.”

It cites Ukrainian intelligence assessments that Russia’s Young Army Cadets National Movement training center has created 500 new cadet classes and 1,000 junior army classes – accepting volunteers as young as 8 – who would not be ready to enter combat for a significant period of time. Russia has also opened up additional training for volunteers for its army, aviation and navy sectors including those “without military experience who want to join the Russian military,” according to the institute.

Ukraine, too, has faced troubling issues as it struggles to field an effective fighting force and the political leadership to support them. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his nightly address revealed that he had fired the chief of Ukraine’s principal security service as well as the prosecutor general – though neither was accused of treason – and that at least 60 people from within those offices who remain in occupied territory are under suspicion of “working against our state.”

He said a total of 200 other people in government had come under similar suspicion.

“The specific actions and any inaction of each official in the security sector and in law enforcement agencies will be evaluated,” Zelenskyy said. “Everyone who together with him was part of a criminal group that worked in the interests of the Russian Federation will also be held accountable.”

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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 UK transport operators: worst yet to come</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jul/18/uk-transport-operators-say-worst-heatwave-problems-yet-to-come">https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jul/18/uk-transport-operators-say-worst-heatwave-problems-yet-to-come</a>
GIST	<p>Record temperatures on Monday forced the cancellation of hundreds of train services, while flights at Luton airport were stopped after heat “melted the runway”.</p> <p>Roads and trains were quieter than usual on Monday morning as many people heeded advice to stay home if possible in the heatwave – but UK transport operators warned the worst was yet to come.</p> <p>Train cancellations and delays started to accumulate in early afternoon, with speed limits brought into force at midday as temperatures edged into the high 30Cs.</p> <p>London Luton airport halted operations on Monday afternoon to repair the runway. The airport said: “Following today’s high temperatures, a surface defect was identified.”</p> <p>Passengers on one incoming easyJet flight from Italy were told they were being diverted because of “bits of tarmac melting” on the runway.</p>



Network Rail said passengers should consider using the railway on Monday and Tuesday only if absolutely necessary, and, if travelling, they should carry water and be prepared for much longer journeys.

Higher temperatures spreading north led to Scotrail on Monday following England and Wales in slowing down trains for safety. Trains across Britain were limited to a 90mph maximum, while on the east coast line linking London, York and Edinburgh the top speed was halved to 60mph.

The east coast line is predicted to experience the hottest temperatures, and some of its infrastructure, including for the wires and track, are more susceptible to damage in heat than other parts of the UK railway. The line will be closed entirely south of Leeds and York on Tuesday.

On the west coast mainline, Avanti was running about one train an hour on big intercity routes on Monday, with a London-Manchester service taking three and a half hours rather than two.

A Network Rail spokesperson said passengers who travelled on Monday morning “should not be lulled into a false sense of security” by services running properly, with the speed limits only coming into effect at noon.

With temperatures poised to remain high throughout the night, the restrictions will remain in place until the end of Tuesday.

That means all long-distance services will inevitably be disrupted, although suburban trains rarely exceed 90mph for long periods. However, the spokesperson said that with peak temperatures of about 40C forecast by the afternoon – and steel rails and equipment likely to be 20C hotter – “breakdowns are inevitable”.

Services on Wednesday, when temperatures are forecast to drop significantly, could be affected by damage to the infrastructure over the next two days.

Stations were reportedly quieter than usual on Monday morning, with noticeably fewer passengers at Birmingham New Street and around London terminals. Network Rail said passenger numbers were down by an estimated 20%.

Tube passenger numbers until 10am were 18% lower than last Monday, and bus passengers 10% down, according to Transport for London. TfL had also advised passengers to travel only if essential, with temporary speed restrictions liable to slow and disrupt parts of its network.

By early afternoon one tube line, the Hammersmith and City line, and parts of the London Overground were suspended because of the heat.

Road congestion data from TomTom, the satnav firm, showed fewer cars on the roads in cities around Britain. Its congestion levels – measured by the percentage delay to free-flowing traffic – in the morning rush-hour were about 5-10% lower than a week ago in London, Bristol, Glasgow and Manchester.

Motoring organisations have warned of a high risk of breakdown, from engines overheating, tyre blowouts and faster fuel consumption in the heat.

Although asphalt on minor roads could reach melting point, a National Highways spokesperson said that the main strategic roads were engineered to be resilient to temperatures of more than 60C, and there were no reported problems.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 UK experiences hottest night on record</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jul/19/uk-hottest-night-on-record-as-temperatures-predicted-to-hit-40c">https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jul/19/uk-hottest-night-on-record-as-temperatures-predicted-to-hit-40c</a>

## GIST

The UK experienced its hottest night on record as it braces for another unprecedented day on Tuesday, with temperatures predicted to hit 40C in a heatwave exacerbated by climate change.

The Met Office has forecast temperatures to reach as high as 41C in some parts of England, where an extreme heat warning is in place, which would make the country hotter than Jamaica, the Maldives and Barbados.

The mercury provisionally hit 25.9 in Emley Moor, West Yorkshire, easily exceeding the previous daily minimum of 23.9C, recorded in Brighton in 1990.

The mercury peaked at 38.1C in Santon Downham, Suffolk, on Monday, making it the hottest day of the year and the third hottest day on record, after 38.7C in Cambridge, in 2019, and 38.5C in Faversham, Kent, in August 2003.

Scotland and Wales are also expected to have their hottest days on record.

Temperatures overnight did not fall below 25C in some places.

Heatwaves have been made hotter, longer and more frequent by climate breakdown, and experts have warned of the need to adapt homes and cities in the UK for a future of more intense – and deadly – summer heat.

Most transport routes across England and Wales will be affected by the hot weather on Tuesday, according to National Rail, with customers advised to travel only if “absolutely necessary”.

Network Rail said: “There will be delays, cancellations and last-minute changes to train services due to the unprecedented record heat on those days.”

The transport secretary, Grant Shapps, said issues on the rails and roads will continue for decades during extreme heatwaves.

Asked how long it would take to upgrade existing rail infrastructure to be more resilient, he told Sky News: “Decades, actually, to replace it all. Ditto with Tarmac on the roads.

“There’s a long process of replacing it and upgrading it to withstand temperatures, either very hot or sometimes much colder than we’ve been used to, and these are the impacts of global warming.”

Southern, South Eastern, South Western Railway and Great Western Railway were among the dozens of train companies running significantly reduced services across the country.

Transport for London (TfL) said London’s rail network would also be running a reduced service on Tuesday due to safety restrictions put into place to deal with the heat.

Elsewhere, council gritters were on standby to spread light dustings of sand on melting roads.

Emergency services and the government have repeated urgent warnings about the dangers of trying to keep cool after several tragedies in waterways and reservoirs during the heatwave.

The family of 13-year-old Robert Hattersley said they were “absolutely devastated” after he died when he got into trouble in the River Tyne in Northumberland on Sunday.

Emergency services also confirmed the deaths of a 16-year-old boy in Salford Quays, Greater Manchester, a 16-year-old boy in Bray Lake near Maidenhead, Berkshire, and a 50-year-old man in a reservoir near Leeds in similar circumstances.

	<p>There have been warnings of pressures on hospitals from the extreme temperatures, and concerns ambulance services would face rising numbers of calls as the heat peaks on Tuesday afternoon.</p> <p>The UK Health Security Agency issued a level 4 heat-health alert – described as an “emergency” – and the UK is under its first red extreme heat warning for a large part of England, issued by the Met Office.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Homeless unhoused end up Mojave Desert</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/18/california-homelessness-crisis-mojave-desert">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/18/california-homelessness-crisis-mojave-desert</a>
GIST	<p>In a remote stretch of southern <a href="#">California</a> desert, at least 200 unhoused people live outside, battling the extremes: blazing hot temperatures in the summer, snow in winter, rugged terrain inaccessible to many vehicles, a constant wind that blankets everything with silt, and no running water for miles.</p> <p>For Candice Winfrey, the conditions almost proved deadly.</p> <p>The 37-year-old lives in a camper in the Mojave desert, on the northern edge of Los Angeles county, miles from the nearest store. During a record-breaking heatwave in July 2020, she found herself running out of water. The jug of a gallon she had left had overheated, the water so hot it was barely drinkable. It was more than 110F (43C), and no one was around to help. She recalled lying in her tent, trying not to think about the heat exhaustion and dehydration overtaking her. “I thought I was gonna die. I was seeing the light. I was just waiting it out and praying to God that I’d make it.”</p> <p>Eventually, she drifted off into a sleep state, she said, reawakening hours later after the sun had started to set and someone came by with cooler water.</p> <p>Previously, Winfrey and others had pitched tents and parked their trailers in the nearby city of Lancaster. But sheriff’s deputies and other authorities there in recent years have cracked down on homelessness, banning people from camping in certain spots, giving out citations for “loitering” and related violations and conducting encampment sweeps that advocates say destroy people’s belongings.</p> <p>The measures, unhoused Lancaster residents say, in effect banished them to unincorporated desert land. There, they face less police harassment, but live isolated from paved roads and basic services in town.</p> <p>As the region enters another brutally hot summer, the crisis has become a public health disaster – one that advocates say illustrates deep flaws in California’s homelessness response.</p> <p>Data obtained by the Guardian shows that the coroner’s office has logged 246 deaths of unhoused people in Lancaster and the surrounding area since 2015, including 18 deaths in the desert and 29 fatalities so far this year. The deaths sharply increased during the pandemic and include causes such as heatstroke, hypothermia, homicide, heart disease and overdose. The numbers are considered a significant undercount.</p> <p>“The county isn’t treating this like a humanitarian crisis,” said Eve Garrow, policy analyst and advocate at the ACLU of Southern California, who has worked with desert residents. “Instead of providing aid, law enforcement displaces them to remote areas so far away from resources that it’s a danger to their health and their lives.”</p> <p><b>A police crackdown</b></p> <p>On a recent windy afternoon, the temperatures outside of Winfrey’s camper reached 90F (32C) – the coolest it had been that week.</p> <p>The region where people camp lies just north of the Lancaster city limits, located in a picturesque landscape that resembles that of Joshua Tree and other national parks, but without the designated hiking routes and amenities. Discarded items of furniture line the bumpy, off-road paths that lead to the tents and RVs, but little else is visible except sand in every direction and mountains in the distance.</p>

Residents are scattered in small communities dispersed throughout the desert, with some couples and individuals in isolated pockets on their own while others cluster together for safety and support. The campers have different stories about how they ended up there: they escaped domestic violence, lost a home during a divorce or to a fire, faced eviction during the pandemic, struggled with addiction, were ostracized because they were LGBTQ+ or were forced to leave home.

But many of them were first unhoused on the streets of Lancaster.

LA county has received international scrutiny for its homelessness catastrophe and worsening [inequality](#). It's home to some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the country, yet has an estimated [66,000 unhoused residents](#) and accounts for [20% of all Americans](#) living outside.

While California is spending an unprecedented amount of money to address this, including by constructing more housing, the fixes have not met the demands, and people are falling into homelessness faster than the unhoused are moving indoors. There have been high-profile encampment shutdowns in the city of LA, in areas such as [Venice Beach](#) and [Echo Park Lake](#).

Lancaster's response has been to criminalize unhoused people's existence, advocates say.

Lancaster [counted](#) 2,053 unhoused people in January 2020 – the latest available data, which is considered an undercount – and the vast majority were living outside in makeshift shelters and vehicles.

But through encampment sweeps and an aggressive ticketing strategy, they've slowly forced people out.

"The city of Lancaster treats us like we are a lost cause, like we're just bums and alcoholics, like we're dirty and they don't want to see us," said Winfrey, who said she became unhoused in Lancaster after relapsing in her struggle with addiction, and losing a job.

She said she used to camp in several locations within the city, including by old train tracks, but authorities kept forcing her to move, leading her to the desert. She is waiting for a subsidized housing voucher. "We are still people. We don't have to be treated like animals or barbarians," she said.

While unhoused people make up nearly 1.3% of the Lancaster population, they accounted for 48% of all police stops for minor municipal code violations in 2020, according to the ACLU, which analyzed public arrest records and obtained citation documents from the LA sheriff's department (LASD).

Some of the tickets, which were shared with the Guardian, suggest police were explicitly targeting people because they were unhoused.

In March 2019, for example, an LASD deputy took an unhoused man to jail on a solicitation charge, citing as evidence the man's sign that said, "Anything helps. God bless." The next month, a man was accused of loitering, and when he rode off on his bike, police followed him and cited him. Another man was questioned by police outside a shopping center and explained he was "sitting in the shade", but officers gave him a loitering ticket because he "had all his personal items laid out". Others have been ticketed for having shopping carts and tents or simply for "illegal camping".

There are also significant racial disparities in the stops: Black residents are 22% of the Lancaster population, but make up 52% of the loitering tickets.

Facing the threat of tickets, which can turn into warrants for arrest and jail time, some say the desert is their only option.

### **'Waiting to die'**

Out in the desert, residents say they rely on help from a local ACLU chapter and other volunteers who visit them – and they have little hope government workers will come to their aid. The ACLU counted roughly 200 people there on a recent visit, though some advocates believe the number is higher.

Christopher Saunders, 35, said one encampment sweep in Lancaster cost him family photos and other belongings. Saunders said he was born and raised in the area and became unhoused after losing work as a plumber during the pandemic. After decamping to the desert, he built an impressive structure out of wood, giving him a fence and a roof. He said police don't bother them much, though occasionally come around to check if people have warrants. When they do show up, they don't offer services, he said.

He's given up hope of getting housing, he said: "Trying to figure out how to eat and get water every day, you don't have time for nothing else."

Saunders goes into a nearby town once a week to fill up a 450-gallon tank with water, but when his car breaks down he has to walk miles back and forth: "It takes all day to get 10 gallons."

The struggle for water is a key concern for almost every resident in this extreme climate.

Melissa Ivory, 37, said she has no transportation so she relies on others to get water and other supplies. But everyone has been driving less because of gas prices, she said. "Without water, your skin starts drying up and cracking. The sun does damage to you out here. It knocks you out and removes your energy." She said she's trying to navigate the complex housing process, but some days feels too drained to get anything done.

Garrow, the ACLU analyst, recalled meeting one woman in the area who told her she had walked miles carrying five gallons of water back to her camping site. She collapsed upon her return and her phone died, preventing her from seeking help. She rationed water, until her daughter eventually found her: "She was waiting to die and she probably would have if her daughter hadn't rescued her."

### **A plea for aid**

The ACLU has urged the local LA county supervisor, Kathryn Barger, whose district includes Lancaster, to seek an end to policies that criminalize the unhoused in Lancaster, including tickets, fines and sweeps.

The civil rights group, which took Barger's staff out to visit residents in the desert in February, also urged the county to provide water and sanitary services to people living outside, that the county allocate more resources to permanent supportive housing options and that service providers offer them without threats of arrest.

Barger's office met with advocates again in June, but nothing has changed, the ACLU said. "We've been having meetings for a year. How many can we have before you do something? It's so dangerous out there," said Ruth Sanchez, an ACLU advocate who drops off supplies weekly.

Barger did not respond to questions about homelessness in the Lancaster region, but said in a statement: "I am deeply concerned by the increasing rates of homelessness and homeless related deaths in Los Angeles, especially those in [my district]. It is unacceptable and a grim reminder that the status quo isn't working."

She said the county was in the process of [revamping](#) its approach to how it coordinates services.

Barger's spokesperson referred inquiries to the county public health department and the LA County Homeless Initiative, which oversees homelessness spending and housing efforts, and both agencies declined to comment. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (Lahsa), which does outreach across the county, did not respond to inquiries about desert residents. LASD, run by a sheriff who has campaigned on a platform of cracking down on homelessness, declined to comment.

Lancaster's mayor, R Rex Parris, has [criticized the ACLU](#), telling a local reporter last year: "We're not dropping these people out in the desert. I don't want people out there with no water. But they'd rather go out into the desert than go back to LA where they're [at risk of being] raped and killed." He said he was not at "war" with unhoused people, but added, "Am I going to allow people to sleep wherever they want and try and get money from people who are shopping? That's not going to happen."

Parris, a Republican, also [made headlines](#) when he suggested residents [arm themselves](#) in response to the growing unhoused population. He defended his comments by calling unhoused people “criminals and thugs”.

A Lancaster city spokesperson pointed to the city’s new [14-acre campus](#) that provides unhoused people with services and living quarters, including 150 permanent supportive housing units, and said there were four additional housing projects in the works meant for currently or formerly unhoused people. The spokesperson did not respond to questions about any efforts to assist people in the desert.

Parris defended law enforcement’s treatment of the unhoused, saying in a statement: “It continues to be in the public interest that persons who commit misdemeanor offenses be held accountable for their crimes.” He also said the city’s goal is to divert people from the criminal system when possible, and that he doesn’t want “low-level offenders to have criminal records”. The mayor said that the city abides by court rulings that prohibit the arrest of unhoused people for sleeping in public, unless shelter is offered.

Tracey Sutton, 47, who grew up in Lancaster and now has a tent and RV in the desert, scoffed at the mayor’s suggestion that people wanted to be there or were coming from outside of the region to camp there.

“Lancaster is my home, *my home*. Why should I have to leave my home?” said Sutton, who has been unhoused for several years but moved from the city to the desert last year. Pointing to her RV, she added: “I have a home, I just have nowhere to park it.” The shelter options she has been offered would not allow her to stay with her husband or keep her dogs, she said.

If officials aren’t going to get them housing, they could at least stop hassling them, Sutton added: “We’re not bothering you. Leave us alone.”

But some desert residents are worried that even out in their remote camping spots, they will once again have to move. In recent weeks, someone put up a large sign near some of their RVs that read: “No parking. No trespassing. Violators will be prosecuted.”

Residents aren’t sure who put it up or who might be enforcing it, but they are bracing for the worst: that they may have to move even further out into the desert this summer.

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HEADLINE	07/19 Day 146 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/19/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-146-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/19/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-146-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Russian forces shelled a town in eastern <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, killing six people, according to Ukrainian officials.</b> “Early in the morning, the town of Toretsk was shelled. A two-storey building with people inside was destroyed,” Ukraine’s state emergency services said. “Rescuers found and recovered the bodies of five dead people in total. Three people were rescued from the rubble and one of them died in hospital.”</li><li>• <b>Zelenskiy has <a href="#">appointed a new security official</a> as acting head of the domestic security agency</b> after <a href="#">two top officials were fired</a> over claims of failure to counter Russian infiltration. Zelenskiy’s childhood friend, Ivan Bakanov, will be replaced by Vasyl Maliuk, a former first deputy head of the SBU who led the anti-corruption and organised crime unit of the agency’s central directorate.</li><li>• <b>The United States will continue to provide intelligence to Ukraine</b> despite recent changes in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s inner circle, the US state department said on Monday. Zelenskiy removed his security service chief and top prosecutor from office on Sunday. US state department spokesperson Ned Price said: “We invest not in personalities, we invest in institutions. We do have an intelligence-sharing relationship with our Ukrainian counterparts ... We continue to proceed ahead with that.”</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ukraine’s first lady, Olena Zelenska, met the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, on Monday</b> as she began a series of high-profile appearances in Washington that will include a session with US counterpart Jill Biden.</li> <li>• <b>Russia’s Gazprom has told customers in Europe it <a href="#">cannot guarantee gas supplies</a> because of “extraordinary” circumstances</b>, according to a letter seen by Reuters. The Russian state gas monopoly said it was declaring force majeure on supplies, starting from 14 June.</li> <li>• <b>Turkey has said a meeting with Ukraine, <a href="#">Russia</a> and the UN this week to discuss resuming Ukraine’s Black Sea grain exports is “probable”</b>, while a Turkish official said lingering “small problems” should be overcome. A Kremlin aide also told reporters that the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will discuss the export of Ukrainian grain at their meeting in Tehran on Tuesday.</li> <li>• <b>Erdoğan has threatened once again to “freeze” Sweden and Finland’s Nato bids unless the military alliance complies with his conditions.</b> “I want to reiterate once again that we will freeze the process if these countries do not take the necessary steps to fulfil our conditions,” he said. Last month, Erdoğan urged the two countries to “do their part” in the fight against terrorism, accusing them of providing a haven for outlawed Kurdish militants.</li> <li>• <b>Ukraine will break diplomatic ties with Belarus if its forces cross the border in support of the Russian invasion</b>, foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said in an interview with <a href="#">Forbes</a>. “Belarus is an accomplice to the crime of aggression, there is no doubt about that. We broke off diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation immediately after the start of the full-scale attack. Relations with Belarus will likewise be severed if the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus cross the border of Ukraine,” he said.</li> <li>• <b>Foreign ministers from European Union countries have agreed another €500m (£425m) of EU funding</b> to supply arms to Ukraine, taking the bloc’s security support to €2.5bn since February. “Today at the EU foreign ministers’ meeting, a political agreement was reached on the fifth tranche of military assistance to Ukraine,” Sweden’s minister for foreign affairs, Ann Linde, said.</li> <li>• <b>Putin said it would be impossible to cut Russia off from the rest of the world</b>, adding that sanctions imposed by western countries would not turn the clock back on Russia’s development.</li> <li>• <b>EU foreign ministers are <a href="#">discussing a ban on Russian gold imports</a></b> to further curb funding for the Kremlin’s war machine. The EU’s high representative for foreign policy, Josep Borrell, said the ban on Russian gold was the most important measure of the latest plan, which is focused largely on “improving the implementation of the already existing sanctions”.</li> <li>• <b>The independent Russian TV station, Dozhd, has begun broadcasting from abroad.</b> The outlet was blocked in March as the government cracked down on independent media outlets following the invasion of Ukraine.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 Russia: NKorea workers rebuild Donbas?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/19/north-korean-workers-could-help-rebuild-donbas-region-russian-ambassador-says">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/19/north-korean-workers-could-help-rebuild-donbas-region-russian-ambassador-says</a>
GIST	<p>North Korea could send workers to two Russian-controlled territories in eastern <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, according to Russia’s ambassador in Pyongyang – a move that would pose a challenge to international sanctions against the North’s nuclear weapons programme.</p> <p>According to <a href="#">NK News</a>, a Seoul-based website, ambassador Alexander Matsegora said North Korean workers could help rebuild the war-shattered infrastructure in the self-proclaimed people’s republics in Donetsk and Luhansk.</p> <p>Matsegora said there were potentially “a lot of opportunities” for economic cooperation between the North and the self-proclaimed republics in Ukraine’s Donbas region, despite UN sanctions.</p> <p>He told the Russian newspaper Izvestia in an interview, according to NK News, that “highly qualified and hard-working Korean builders, who are capable of working in the most difficult conditions, could help us restore our social, infrastructure and industrial facilities”.</p>

His comments come days after North Korea became one of only a few countries to recognise the two territories, accusing the Ukrainian government of being part of Washington's "hostile" stance towards Pyongyang.

The North's foreign ministry said: "Ukraine has no the right to raise issue or dispute our legitimate exercise of sovereignty after committing an act that severely lacks fairness and justice between nations by actively joining the US unjust and illegal hostile policy in the past."

In response, a furious Ukraine cut off diplomatic ties with North Korea and accused it of undermining Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Ukrainian foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, said Russia's appeal to North Korea for support showed that Moscow had "no more allies in the world, except for countries that depend on it financially and politically".

Ukraine had already suspended its political and economic contact with North Korea as part of UN-led sanctions aimed at pressuring Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

North Korea has traditionally earned much-needed foreign currency by sending its citizens to work overseas. Under UN-sanctions they were supposed to have been repatriated by the end of 2019, but significant numbers of North Korean labourers have reportedly continued to work in Russia and China, as well as in Laos and Vietnam, after the deadline.

Matsegora left open the possibility for another showdown with the UN over sanctions after he suggested that North Korean factories and power stations built during the Soviet era could use equipment built in the Donbas region, where Moscow-backed forces have been fighting Ukraine since 2014.

This would contravene a UN ban, imposed in late 2017, on North Korea acquiring industrial machinery, electronic equipment and other items.

Matsegora acknowledged that sanctions could frustrate attempts to establish a trade link between the republics and North Korea, but said economic ties were "absolutely justified", NK News said.

Go Myong-hyun, a research fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, was quoted by NK News as saying that economic cooperation would confirm that Russia – a permanent member of the UN security council that has imposed sanctions on the North – had become a rogue state.

"Once Russia violates the very sanctions it had authorised, the security council would be critically undermined," Go said.

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HEADLINE	07/18 Ukraine war poses test Europe leaders
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/18/costs-of-ukraine-war-poses-tests-for-european-leaders-and-it-may-get-worse">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/18/costs-of-ukraine-war-poses-tests-for-european-leaders-and-it-may-get-worse</a>
GIST	<p>Desperate efforts in Italy to prevent the fall of Mario Draghi's government are only the latest political firestorm in Europe tied to Vladimir Putin's tests of the west's powers of endurance. Draghi's foreign minister, Luigi di Maio, suggested it will be Putin who celebrated the fall of another western government if Draghi does not survive a confidence vote in parliament on Wednesday.</p> <p>"A boat without a rudder goes adrift," said Ferruccio Resta, the president of the Conference of Italian University Rectors – a metaphor that could apply, to Putin's satisfaction, to much of Europe as governments come under growing pressure over the perceived domestic cost of the war in Ukraine.</p>

The narrative of a brewing popular revolt against western sanctions on Russia certainly fits well with Putin's central narrative that time and economics are on his side since the sanctions are damaging European consumers more than Russia's.

He feels soaring fuel prices are the most lethal of macroeconomic shocks for politicians as they drive inflation while slowing economic growth.

As yet it is premature to take a definitive view about the scale of the potential electoral backlash in [Europe](#), and Josep Borrell, the EU foreign affairs spokesperson, for instance, angrily complained that rising prices were being attributed to EU sanctions without any evidence. Borrell said of the critics of EU sanctions: "Don't they have eyes? Do they not look at the graphs? Do they not consider figures or facts?"

In [France](#), Emmanuel Macron has been weakened if not muted by the loss of his parliamentary majority to parties more naturally sympathetic to Putin. In Spain, the Socialists, facing elections next year, have just lost their power base in Andalusia, the most populous region. The centre-right People's party achieved a new record high of 36.3 % in the latest GAD3 poll, its best result since April 2017. If repeated in an election it would be its best result since 2011.

In [Estonia](#), the fiercely anti-Putin prime minister, Kaja Kallas, survived last week after her previous coalition government fell in a dispute linked to the country's inflation rate of 19%, the highest in the 19-nation eurozone. Electricity prices in Estonia are at a record high, averaging €300 per megawatt-hour last week.

Kallas skilfully reconstructed her government, but at some cost to the Estonian budget and her credibility. If the economy has not improved by the time of legislative elections next March, she could be in trouble. In Warsaw, the PiS frets about electoral defeat next autumn, even if the opposition would remain supportive of Ukraine. In Bulgaria, a pro-western government has fallen. And, of course, Volodymyr Zelenskiy has just been let down spectacularly by the self-inflicted demise of Boris Johnson in Britain.

The politician who has fared best at the ballot box most recently is probably Viktor Orbán, Putin's greatest ally in Europe. Orbán is glorying in it. He said at first he believed European politicians had only "shot themselves in the foot", but now it is clear that it was a shot to the lungs of the European economy, which is struggling for air everywhere.

It may be about to get worse – much worse. On Wednesday, apart from the issue for [Italy](#) of Draghi's survival, the EU will have to decide whether it can agree on a solidarity mechanism if Russian gas supplies run out this winter.

Putin's intentions on that front will become clear on Thursday when the Russian monopoly gas supplier Gazprom will decide whether to resume supplies to Europe after the annual scheduled maintenance break on the Nord Stream 1 pipeline. The signs are ominous. Gazprom has already said in a private letter to gas customers that it [cannot guarantee gas supplies](#) and declared force majeure.

German politicians are not disguising from the electorate the scale of the threat, part of an effort to ensure they understand that Putin is culpable. The German economics minister, Robert Habeck, described Putin's tactics as an attack on Germany capable of causing a catastrophe.

Klaus Müller, Germany's energy regulator, said gas prices for consumers may triple by 2023. He said it was "absolutely realistic" that customers who currently pay €1,500 a year for gas would be asked to pay €4,500 and more in the future. Thomas Matussek, a former German ambassador to London, told the BBC on Monday: "If push comes to shove, we are probably entering the biggest economic crisis that Germany has experienced since the end of the second world war."

Despite the current heatwave, Matussek was right to say winter is already coming, and the critical issue will be the level of European gas reserves going into that winter. Putin's optimum leverage will come from keeping Germany, still dependent on Russia for a third of its gas going into winter, on the shortest of

	<p>leashes. Unlike when previous routine maintenance was being carried out, Gazprom did not ramp up gas supplies through Ukraine's pipelines this time, so Russian gas exports to Europe are currently about a quarter of normal. A titanic struggle between Germany and Russia may loom.</p> <p>By contrast, some countries are better protected. Italy, for instance, has filled far more than 65% of its gas storage capacity and is on track to achieve its target of reaching storage levels of 90% in October, Roberto Cingolani, the ecological transition minister, said at the weekend.</p> <p>Russia has stopped gas supplies to Poland, Bulgaria, Finland and the Netherlands, and constrained supplies to eight others. Spain's Enagas has said Spaniards have nothing to fear from a Russian cutoff since it can access gas from elsewhere.</p> <p>Here lies the risk for Russia. It can go for broke in trying to make the EU's resolve crumble this winter by turning the power off in as many European countries as possible. But Putin will have only one shot at this, and if he fails and Europe's reserves are big enough to survive to next summer, the west will be on the brink of breaking free from its dependence on Russian gas. Putin will have permanently blown up Russia's chief source of income and largest gas export market.</p> <p>Fiona Hill, a former US assistant state secretary, argues that there are electoral risks in this for Moscow, especially in 2024 when Putin seeks to extend his term. She says Putin "wants to get this conflict over with. He wants to seem legitimate. He wants us to be the ones who feel that we don't have time – when he also has a clock ticking."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Experts issue warnings over monkeypox</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/18/monkeypox-vaccines-testing-us-latest-warning-threat">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/18/monkeypox-vaccines-testing-us-latest-warning-threat</a>
GIST	<p>As health authorities in the US <a href="#">warn</a> that <a href="#">monkeypox</a> must be taken more seriously, at-risk communities continue to face a limited supply of <a href="#">vaccines</a> and lack of access to testing, while those contracting the virus in the US have struggled to receive treatment, according to reports.</p> <p>"This is something we definitely need to take seriously. We don't know the scope and the potential of it yet, but we have to act like it will have the capability of spreading much more widely than it's spreading right now," <a href="#">Anthony Fauci</a>, Joe Biden's top medical adviser, <a href="#">said</a> on CNN this weekend.</p> <p><a href="#">Scott Gottlieb</a>, the former US Food and Drug Administration commissioner, told CBS's Face the Nation: "I think the window for getting control of this and containing it probably has closed. And, if it hasn't closed, it's certainly starting to close."</p> <p>There were 1,814 confirmed cases of monkeypox in the US as of Friday afternoon, <a href="#">according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</a> (CDC). Fauci and Gottlieb both expressed their belief that the actual numbers were higher – and stressed the need for testing.</p> <p>Fauci said the data was "very likely an undercount". He told CNN: "Whenever you have the emergence of something like this, you are always probably looking at what might be, might be, we don't know, the tip of the iceberg, so that's the reason why we've got to get the testing out there in a much, much more vigorous way."</p> <p>Gottlieb said that the authorities are probably detecting "just a fraction" of cases. "We had, for a long time, a very narrow case definition on who got tested and by and large, we're looking in the community of men who have sex with men and at STD clinics... But it's a fact that there's cases outside that community right now. We're not picking them up because we're not looking there," Gottlieb said.</p> <p>Monkeypox is not a sexually transmitted virus; it spreads "through close, physical contact between individuals", according to the <a href="#">New York state health department</a>, which added: "This means anyone can</p>

	<p>get monkeypox. However, based on the current outbreak, certain populations are being affected by monkeypox more than others, including men who have sex with men.”</p> <p>More than 132,000 doses of <a href="#">vaccine against monkeypox</a> have been taken out of the US strategic stockpile and sent across the country, but health authorities estimate that more than 1.5 million US residents qualify for this two-dose vaccination, <a href="#">according to CNN</a>.</p> <p>The US has ordered almost 7 million doses, but the majority will not arrive for months, leaving many at risk, Forbes <a href="#">reported</a>.</p> <p>New York City, for example, “does not have sufficient vaccine supply to reach the number of people who need it [to] protect themselves”, health department officials <a href="#">said</a> Friday. The city has now seen 461 cases of monkeypox, as the location of the greatest number of confirmed US cases.</p> <p>Monkeypox patients have described numerous barriers in accessing care. Gabriel Morales <a href="#">told</a> the New York Times that it took him nine hours of inquiries just to secure a test.</p> <p>After Morales returned home, he never received a phone call with his results and worked to obtain antiviral treatment and pain medication.</p> <p>“It was just the worst pain I’ve experienced in my life,” Morales told the newspaper.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 UN head: ‘collective suicide’ over climate</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jul/18/humanity-faces-collective-suicide-over-climate-crisis-warns-un-chief">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jul/18/humanity-faces-collective-suicide-over-climate-crisis-warns-un-chief</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Wildfires and heatwaves</a> wreaking havoc across swathes of the globe show humanity facing “collective suicide”, the UN secretary general has warned, as governments around the world scramble to protect people from the impacts of extreme heat.</p> <p>António Guterres told ministers from 40 countries meeting to discuss the climate crisis on Monday: “Half of humanity is in the danger zone, from floods, droughts, extreme storms and wildfires. No nation is immune. Yet we continue to feed our fossil fuel addiction.”</p> <p>He added: “We have a choice. Collective action or collective suicide. It is in our hands.”</p> <p>Wildfires raged at the weekend across Europe and <a href="#">north America</a>. In south America, the Macchu Picchu archaeological site was <a href="#">threatened by fire</a>. Extreme heat has broken records around the world in recent months, as <a href="#">heatwaves have struck India</a> and south Asia, <a href="#">droughts have devastated parts of Africa</a>, and unprecedented heatwaves at both poles simultaneously <a href="#">astonished scientists in March</a>.</p> <p>In the UK, an <a href="#">extreme heat warning</a> was issued with the hottest temperatures ever recorded in the UK expected on Monday and highs above 40C forecast in some places.</p> <p>Ministers meeting in Berlin for a two-day climate conference known as the Petersberg Climate Dialogue will discuss the extreme weather, as well as soaring prices for fossil fuels and food, and the impacts of the climate crisis. The meeting, convened annually for the last 13 years by the German government, marks one of the last opportunities to hammer out agreement among key countries before the <a href="#">Cop27 UN climate summit in Egypt</a> this November.</p> <p>Alok Sharma, who chaired the <a href="#">Cop26 UN climate summit in Glasgow last November</a>, will be absent from the Berlin conference, though he will join several sessions virtually. He must stay in London to vote in the Conservative party leadership contest, which will determine who takes over as UK prime minister from Boris Johnson. The UK still holds the presidency of the UN talks until Egypt takes on the mantle, and Sharma’s absence raised eyebrows among some participants.</p>



Prospects for Cop27 have dimmed considerably in recent months, as energy and food price rises have engulfed governments in an inflationary cost-of-living crisis, prompted in part by the gradual emergence from the Covid-19 pandemic, and exacerbated by the war in Ukraine.

At Cop26, countries agreed to limit global heating to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, but the commitments they made were still inadequate to do so. All countries agreed to come forward this year with improved national plans for greenhouse gas emissions, known as [nationally determined contributions \(NDCs\)](#).

Frans Timmermans, the vice president of the European Commission, who leads the EU bloc at the UN climate talks, [dampened expectations for the conference](#) in an interview with Guardian. “I don’t see that many new NDCs on the horizon, frankly,” he said, pointing to Australia, with its new government, as a rare exception.

Sameh Shoukry, Egypt’s foreign minister and the president of Cop27, will attend the Berlin talks this week, but his presence will be overshadowed by concerns over Egypt’s own recently submitted NDC. The plan disappointed many observers, who had hoped for much greater levels of ambition, to set an example to other emerging economies.

Guterres also sharply criticised the “multilateral development banks”, institutions including the World Bank that are funded by taxpayers in the rich world to provide assistance to poor countries.

He said they were not fit for purpose when it came to providing the funding needed for the climate crisis, and that they should be reformed.

He said: “As shareholders of multilateral development banks, developed countries must demand immediate delivery of the investments and assistance needed to expand renewable energy and build climate-resilience in developing countries. Demand that these banks become fit-for-purpose. Demand that they change their tired frameworks and policies to take more risk ... Let’s show developing countries that they can rely on their partners.”

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HEADLINE	07/18 Air travel is broken; here's why
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/air-travel-is-broken-heres-why-11658152047?mod=hp_lead_pos5">https://www.wsj.com/articles/air-travel-is-broken-heres-why-11658152047?mod=hp_lead_pos5</a>
GIST	<p>This summer was supposed to mark the rebirth of commercial aviation after two years of travel restrictions left the industry nearly in hibernation.</p> <p>Instead, it is turning into one of the most chaotic travel seasons in decades.</p> <p>Flights are being canceled, and delays are becoming chronic. Baggage is getting lost. Hourslong waits for check-in, luggage drop-off and security have exasperated travelers.</p> <p>It's not just one thing going wrong. The system is under strain or breaking down at every link in the chain, and each of the problems at the airlines and airports exacerbates others.</p> <p>A <a href="#">dearth of baggage handlers and security agents</a> keeps passengers from checking in, leading to flight delays. When immigrations and customs at hub airports are short-staffed, passengers have sometimes had to wait on planes, an issue that affected 2,700 flights arriving in Toronto in May. All this means that pilots and flight attendants work longer days and that there is less time for overnight maintenance. Over time, crew and equipment shortages build.</p> <p>Airlines around the world that received pandemic bailout money or benefited from government-supported furlough schemes hoped to avoid such headaches. They started planning their full return to the skies almost as soon as they were largely grounded in early 2020.</p>



This year, carriers starved of revenue planned big capacity increases for the spring and summer. But some of the steps they took to shrink in 2020 have proved to be hard to reverse. They found they couldn't staff back up quickly enough, in an industry that requires both background checks and training for new workers, sometimes involving time spent on flight simulators.

To address the spate of flight delays, some airports have imposed limits on passengers and flights, and some airlines have trimmed their newly enhanced schedules. But those moves have further upended travelers' plans.

"We stretched ourselves to try and grab and secure as much of the revenue pie as we could," said Ed Bastian, chief executive of Delta Air Lines. "We did get caught off guard, as I think everyone in the industry did to some degree."

Delta has since pulled back its flying plans, measures it says have helped stabilize operations that were beset by delays and cancellations in May and June. That has come at a financial cost. Delta isn't planning to add more flying for at least the rest of the year, even as demand remains robust, executives said.

U.S. domestic traffic has been humming for the better part of a year, though at a lower level than in pre-Covid days. Countries have dropped many international travel restrictions. But while the majority of flights arrive as scheduled, disruptions are up significantly both from the past quiet two years and from the period before the pandemic.

Toronto Pearson International saw 52.9% of flights between June 1 and July 12 depart late, according to flight data specialist FlightAware, the highest percentage among airports with 1,000 or more completed flights. Frankfurt Airport in Germany and Paris Charles de Gaulle had delays in 46.4% and 42.8% of departures, and London Heathrow in 40.2%.

Outside of China, where the zero-Covid policy has hobbled airlines, Newark Liberty had the highest percentage of cancellations from June 1 to July 12—7.8% of departures scrapped, vs. 4.5% in that period of 2019, according to FlightAware. LaGuardia in New York had 7.2% canceled in the same period, also a steep rise from 2019.

In good times, a day in aviation unfolds like a minutely choreographed global ballet, ferrying passengers and their bags through airports, onto planes, into the sky and back down again.

Usually, there's enough redundancy built into the system to limit the disruption from anything that goes wrong. The difficulty in hiring airport and airline staffers has meant that redundancy isn't there now.

"The question on everybody's lips is, 'Where have they all gone?'" said Tim Clark, president of Emirates Airline, at an event last month. "There are hundreds of millions of people that have disappeared from the labor market."

The pressure points include too few ground handlers to load and unload luggage, a long training period for new or rehired pilots, continued absences from Covid-19 and [shortages of the air-traffic controllers](#) crucial for safe flying.

London Heathrow Airport, which has been [a focal point for staff shortages and resulting havoc](#), last week followed London Gatwick, Frankfurt and Amsterdam's Schiphol in restricting airlines' operations. Heathrow, which before Covid-19 was the second-biggest airport for international traffic after Dubai, said it would limit departing passengers to 100,000 a day through Sept. 11, which is 4,000 below what had been scheduled.

A spokesman for Heathrow said that passenger levels have returned to about 80% to 85% of before the pandemic, but airline-handling teams are only about 70% staffed. The airport has said that many airlines, which are responsible for their ground handling and luggage operations, are also understaffed.

Swissport International Ltd., an aviation services and baggage handler at many airports, is currently trying to fill about 17,000 jobs, offering sign-on bonuses of \$5,000 at some U.S. airports. Smaller competitor Menzies Aviation had 1,800 positions it was trying to fill as of June 30.

The work demands, which can include shifts seven days a week and nighttime hours, mean the job often isn't attractive enough to compete with vacancies in other industries. Potential recruits are also spooked by the mass retrenchments the industry went through just two years ago and the possible impact from an economic downturn, according to Menzies CEO Philipp Joeinig.

"You see the uncertainty in people's minds," he said. "What happens after summer? Is there going to be a recession?...Do I have a job if I go there now?"

He said the biggest bottleneck involves the new-employee background checks required for airport staff. The process takes 60 days on average, but up to three months in some jurisdictions.

Among the worst shortages are at teams that handle baggage, resulting in a scourge of lost and misplaced suitcases this summer. On July 11, Delta flew an Airbus A330 from Heathrow to Detroit with no passengers and instead just 1,000 bags that had been lost.

[Icelandair Group](#) has at times sent baggage handlers along on flights to Amsterdam because there weren't enough ground staff there. One Icelandair customer-service representative went to Amsterdam to sort out lost bags and ended up helping coordinate a plane with more cargo space to send luggage back to Iceland, said Sýlvía Kristín Ólafsdóttir, chief customer officer.

"We just have to find creative solutions," she said.

Data on lost luggage isn't widely tracked, but SITA, a Swiss-based firm that manages baggage-tracking software used by airlines, said passengers flagged three times as many mishandled bags from January through March as in that stretch of 2021. In April through June, the figure was five times that of a year earlier, SITA said.

Mechanical failures in baggage systems at Toronto Pearson airport recently led to piles of bags being stashed alongside baggage carousels. Heathrow in June had an outage on suitcase conveyor belts that forced it to store thousands of bags it couldn't get to passengers. Hundreds of bags were lined up on the concourse outside one terminal after it ran out of storage space inside.

When the pandemic drastically cut flying in 2020, carriers encouraged thousands of their pilots to retire. Reversing course, large U.S. airlines have hired more pilots just since Jan. 1 than in any other full year, according to FAPA.aero, a pilot-career advisory firm.

Pilots need training at their new airlines, which with so many coming aboard means long waits for time with the limited number of flight simulators and instructors. At Delta, about 1,600 pilots, more than 10% of its total, were in training over the course of last month, Mr. Bastian said.

[Deutsche Lufthansa](#) AG also had hundreds of pilots who still required training on specific aircraft. In addition, the company has more than a thousand flight attendants sitting at home waiting to get qualified, said CEO Carsten Spohr.

Sun Country Holdings Inc., a low-price carrier based in Minneapolis, kept on a lot of its pilots when the pandemic began because it also has a cargo operation. But this year [they started getting hired away by large airlines](#) that were ramping up operations.

One result for Sun Country was a bigger burden on its pilot training resources. The time for pilots from hiring to being ready to fly passengers for Sun Country has lengthened to 115 days from 75, said CEO Jude Bricker. "There's just a lot of people to try and force through that pipeline."

Mr. Bricker said it used to be straightforward for airlines to estimate how many pilots would leave and thus how many would need to be hired and trained. “Now it’s really, really complicated,” he said.

Illness and Covid-19 absences add to the complications. Eurowings, a discount carrier owned by Lufthansa, had to cancel a return flight to Heathrow on July 5 after a crew member fell ill and Eurowings didn’t have sufficient reserve staff to fill the gap; all were filling in for other shortages.

In Melbourne, Australia, about 8% of flights have been canceled since the start of June, by preliminary figures, the majority to and from Sydney. “The rebound in four months has been unbelievable, and quite often people say, ‘Well, why weren’t you prepared for it?’ ” said Jim Parashos, Melbourne Airport’s chief of aviation. “Well, we had probably six or seven false starts over the last two years with Covid outbreaks and new variants.”

In the U.S. and Europe, some airlines complain that staffing constraints in air-traffic control also prompt delays that jam up flights. Airlines held talks on the issue with the Federal Aviation Administration after storm-related flying disruptions this spring that the airlines said were worsened by air-traffic-control delays.

“There are just more flights scheduled industrywide than the ATC staffing system can handle,” United Airlines executive Jon Roitman told employees earlier this month.

The FAA said that there are multiple factors at play, including airlines’ own staffing levels, and that air-traffic control staffing isn’t responsible for the majority of delays and cancellations.

[Alaska Air Group](#) has skimmed a few percentage points off its summer capacity, compared with the plans it had at the start of the year. Said its CEO, Ben Minicucci: “You just have to take a lot, a lot more care in how you develop a schedule and make sure your staffing is done right, because there are so many variables today.”

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HEADLINE	07/18 Jobs data raises questions on labor market
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/diverging-jobs-data-raise-questions-about-labor-market-health-11658136600?mod=hp_lead_pos7">https://www.wsj.com/articles/diverging-jobs-data-raise-questions-about-labor-market-health-11658136600?mod=hp_lead_pos7</a>
GIST	<p>The U.S. added workers at a strong pace over the past three months. It is also losing workers.</p> <p>The conflicting employment data come from two different surveys—one of employers and one of households—used to calculate employment, unemployment and other key figures in the Labor Department’s monthly jobs report. The divergence raises questions about the labor market’s overall strength as more signs point to a slowing economy.</p> <p>The survey of employers shows nonfarm payrolls growing by an average of 375,000 jobs a month over the past three months. The household survey shows the economy losing an average of 116,000 jobs a month during the same span.</p> <p>Many economists consider the establishment survey more reliable—in part because the household survey has a smaller sample size and a larger margin of error. The two series tend to converge over time. But some are watching the deteriorating household data closely for early signs the labor market is at a turning point.</p> <p>“While the household survey is much noisier than the establishment survey on a month-to-month basis, it picks up changes in net new firm creation in real time and therefore often outperforms the establishment survey at cyclical turning points, provided both measures are averaged over several months,” Goldman Sachs economist Jan Hatzius said in a July 11 research note. “This suggests that the still-robust nonfarm payroll prints of recent months probably overstate true job growth.”</p>

Taken alone, a few poor months for household data alongside solid nonfarm payroll gains might not merit such concern. But the recent losing streak corresponds with other data suggesting slowing growth and some cracks in the labor market.

Gross domestic product, a broad measure of economic output, contracted at a 1.6% annual pace in the first quarter of the year and could decline again in the second quarter. [Economists surveyed](#) by The Wall Street Journal this month on average estimate that GDP advanced at a mere 0.37% annual rate in the second quarter, down from 2.98% in an April survey.

Job openings remain robust but have come off recent records. Initial claims for unemployment benefits, a proxy for layoffs, hit their lowest in more than a half-century in March but have since trended upward, and hit their highest level since last November in the week ended July 9. The Institute for Supply Management's survey of purchasing managers at U.S. factories showed employment contracting in May and June; ISM's service-sector index showed employment contracting in three of the past five months, though businesses sometimes complained they weren't hiring because they couldn't find qualified applicants.

Anecdotal, more companies are trimming staff, slowing hiring or sometimes rescinding job offers. [Alphabet](#) Inc.'s Google last Tuesday became one of the latest tech companies to brace for a weakening economy [when it announced a slowdown in hiring](#).

Guy Berger, principal economist at LinkedIn, said none of the labor-market data is "screaming recession." But the household survey, jobless claims, job openings, LinkedIn's in-house data—which shows hiring via the LinkedIn platform in June was down almost 12% from a year earlier—and other indicators all suggest the labor market is slowing down.

"To my mind I'm a little nervous when people run around saying look at these really good nonfarm payroll numbers. Maybe they overstate the strength a little bit," Mr. Berger said.

The Labor Department also revises its nonfarm payroll numbers several times, but not the household data. Research on previous recessions and recoveries indicate that initial payroll estimates tend to understate job creation in the early stages of a recovery, and overstate it in the early stages of a downturn.

The divergence is partly because the surveys define employment differently. The household survey, for example, includes workers in private households such as nannies or housekeepers, farmworkers and the self-employed, while the establishment survey doesn't. Someone with two jobs is counted twice in the payroll survey, once in the household survey.

When the Labor Department adjusts its household survey to the payroll definition of employment, the picture isn't quite as bad—employment rose over the past three months, though by a still-meager average of 37,000 a month.

Tracked side by side, though, both sets of household numbers show a sharp drop-off in hiring since March.

"The conclusion I would make is that I wouldn't have confidence that either measure is telling the full truth. The truth could be somewhere in the middle, though I lean toward the household survey," said Derek Holt, head of capital markets economics at Scotiabank.

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HEADLINE	07/18 Officials aren't sounding alarm on Covid
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/briefing/officials-arent-sounding-the-alarm-on-covid.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/briefing/officials-arent-sounding-the-alarm-on-covid.html</a>
GIST	Health leaders muted as cases rise The BA.5 subvariant, now the cause of at least two-thirds of U.S. cases, is driving a Covid spike in some 40 states. But Americans, exhausted from repeated surge warnings, are less likely than ever to wear masks or avoid crowds. Many U.S. health officials aren't speaking out against such practices.

“I think they’re trying to keep their powder dry,” said my colleague Thomas Fuller, our San Francisco bureau chief and one of three reporters on today’s story about [the state of the virus](#). “They seem to believe it’s not realistic to bring back severe measures right now.”

In Chicago, where the Covid warning levels jumped to “high” last week, Dr. Allison Arwady, the health department commissioner, said, “I feel strongly that you can’t just kind of cry wolf all the time.”

Dr. Joseph Kanter, Louisiana’s state health officer and medical director, said that, despite higher Covid levels, he felt “much more empowered that we have the ability to protect ourselves.” Dr. Anthony Fauci said in a recent White House briefing that Americans should not let Covid “disrupt our lives.” (Los Angeles County, however, is planning to [reinstate indoor mask mandates](#) on July 29 as the state’s Covid cases increase.)

Home testing makes the current data murkier. Not since the earliest months has so little been known about how many coronavirus infections there are. Slightly higher death rates, a 20 percent increase in hospitalizations and other signs point to a new surge, but hospitalizations and deaths are far fewer than in previous spikes, with many more people vaccinated or able to treat symptoms.

I spoke to Thomas as he drove to Yosemite to check on the Washburn fire. He reiterated health officials are in a tough situation, given extreme pandemic fatigue. In the Bay Area, where he lives, Thomas said most people continue to mask, but some are so frustrated, they’re “throwing caution to the winds. They have a sense of futility that wasn’t as evident in the past.”

The chief concern he drew from his reporting, Thomas said, is that this stage of the virus might be “kind of creating a giant petri dish” for subvariants.

“Chances go up when more virus is circulating,” he told me. “With so many more bodies hosting it, experts told me there’s so much more potential for future variants which may or may not be more serious.”

Dr. Charles Chiu, a virologist at the University of California, San Francisco, stressed to Thomas that it’s crucial new variants be detected quickly, especially in wastewater. (Chiu detected the first U.S. case of Omicron in a traveler, then learned it was in wastewater two weeks beforehand.) That’s the point where public restrictions aimed at prevention could become urgent again, Chiu said.

As officials hold back and the public drops its guard, Thomas told me, “I think we’re at a point of trying to understand the consequences of complacency. We don’t understand them yet. But the more widespread the virus, the higher the risks of a new variant. That’s the concern that the people I spoke to expressed.”

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HEADLINE	07/18 Russia ‘weakened’ by costs of Ukraine war
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/despise-bravado-russia-seen-weakened-costs-ukraine/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/despise-bravado-russia-seen-weakened-costs-ukraine/</a>
GIST	<p>Russia has struggled to meet all of its top strategic goals in Ukraine, but the U.S. and its NATO allies may be on the verge of meeting one of theirs.</p> <p>Estimates underscore the depth of damage to Russia’s military nearly five months into its invasion. The staggering number of casualties and the vehicles and equipment lost have left the Russian army severely degraded, even as it makes slow, grinding territorial gains in Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region.</p> <p>That doesn’t count the costs back home. Despite strong energy export revenue, the Russian economy may shrink by one-tenth this year, Russian banks, universities and sports teams are cut off from the international arena, and sanctions have led Western suppliers to cut off key commodities and Western retailers to shutter their Russian operations.</p>

Crushing Moscow's capacity to wage offensive war has been a central component of the West's game plan since the early days of the conflict. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spelled out that strategy in April when he said flatly that NATO wants Russia weakened to the degree that it can't launch another invasion in the foreseeable future.

Russians reacted furiously to Mr. Austin's comment, and some Western observers felt he might have gone too far, but that was before the costs of the invasion came clearly into focus for the Kremlin.

Western officials aren't celebrating, but they are zeroing in on the long-term damage to the Russian military machine each day the war drags on. Adm. Tony Radakin, the head of the British military, said over the weekend that Russia has sustained about 50,000 casualties and has lost roughly 1,700 tanks along with a significant number of other vehicles and equipment.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his military leadership did not anticipate such widespread death and destruction. By most accounts, they expected a quick, easy victory with relatively little resistance or bloodshed when their forces crossed into Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Instead, Russia may be sustaining permanent damage that will compromise its status as a major military player on the international stage.

"Russia is a more diminished nation than it was at the beginning of February," Adm. Radakin said, according to British media outlets.

For President Biden, a weakened Russian military represents a big-picture geopolitical success, even as the U.S. and its allies face strains in the war.

It also opens the administration to criticism about its long-term plan for U.S. troop deployments in Europe and the Pacific. Some Republicans see little need to reinforce NATO's eastern flank when Russia is so badly wounded.

"Why is Biden sending more troops, planes & ships to Europe instead of the Pacific?" Sen. Marco Rubio, Florida Republican, asked in a Twitter post this month after the White House announced plans to station additional U.S. troops in Europe.

"Russia's military is in no condition to invade anyone else right now and it's China & North Korea who are threatening military aggression," Mr. Rubio said.

### **Mounting losses**

Mr. Putin rejects the notion that Russia's military is becoming a shell of its former self. The losses his country has sustained in Ukraine, he said Monday, won't affect the country's long-term trajectory or its spot as a global military powerhouse.

"It is clear that this is a huge challenge for our country, but ... we are not going to give up and stay in a state of disarray or, as some of our well-wishers predict, go back decades. Of course not," the Russian leader said during a video conference with government development officials.

The numbers suggest otherwise. The 50,000 figure cited by Adm. Radakin is difficult to confirm. If it is correct, then Moscow has lost nearly 6% of its active-duty military personnel in less than five months of combat against an opponent that, on paper, is much weaker. Although Russia has made some gains in southern and eastern Ukraine, progress has been slow and bloody.

The online clearinghouse Globalfirepower.com lists Russia's active-duty force at about 850,000, with another 250,000 reserve forces and 250,000 in paramilitary groups such as the Wagner Group.



The paramilitary forces are now playing a much larger role in Ukraine, British military officials say, as Russia struggles to replenish its ranks and keep the pressure on the Ukrainian front lines in the Donbas.

In its battlefield update Monday, the British Ministry of Defense said Wagner Group security personnel have played an increasingly prominent part in Russia's conquest of the Luhansk province, one of two provinces making up the Donbas. Still, the group's involvement is another signal that Russia is having trouble supplying trained regular army troops for the mission, and that has come at a price.

"Wagner are lowering recruitment standards, hiring convicts and formerly blacklisted individuals," British officials said in a Twitter post. "Very limited training is made available to new recruits. This will highly likely impact on the future operational effectiveness of the group and will reduce its value as a prop to the regular Russian forces."

Indeed, Moscow has relied heavily on the Wagner Group and other paramilitary arms to do its bidding in Syria and other war zones. Serious damage to the group will dramatically limit the Kremlin's ability to project power outside its borders without directly using its soldiers, which has become a hallmark of Mr. Putin's approach to military and foreign policy over the past decade.

### **Long-term consequences**

The Kremlin also is trying new tactics to boost the ranks of its enlisted force. Mr. Putin so far has stopped short of a full-scale draft, but specialists say Moscow is mounting a concerted push to find more troops to reinforce the Russian military in Ukraine.

"The Kremlin has decided on a two-pronged approach," Paul Goble, a researcher with the Jamestown Foundation, wrote recently for the organization's Eurasia Daily Monitor.

"On the one hand, it is radically expanding its efforts to recruit volunteers, mostly in rural areas far from Moscow; on the other, it is calling on the governments of Russia's predominantly ethnic Russian regions and its non-Russian republics to form battalions that can be dispatched to Ukraine," he wrote. "The first has not yet proved successful. And the second, now just beginning, is sparking as much concern as hope that it can produce what Moscow wants without issue."

Although Mr. Putin's power base is seen as largely unchallenged, the Kremlin appears fearful of a popular backlash if it resorts to a major civilian draft for what officials still call a "special military operation."

Russia also appears to recognize the potential long-term ramifications of its war in Ukraine. Researchers with the Institute for the Study of War said Sunday that Russia's Young Army Cadets National Movement has opened 500 more cadet classes and 1,000 junior army classes in Belgorod and other cities near the Ukraine border.

Children as young as 8 can enlist in such programs, but they won't be eligible for combat for years. That suggests Russian officials realize they need a long-term plan to avoid a massive manpower shortage down the road.

Manpower is just one of Russia's challenges. Although Russian military leaders have improved their battlefield tactics and limited the damage from Ukrainian drone and artillery strikes, the number of vehicles lost will likely take years to replace.

In addition to a massive number of tanks, Russia has lost at least 490 armored fighting vehicles, 953 infantry fighting vehicles, 127 armored personnel carriers, 90 command posts and communication stations, 65 surface-to-air missile systems and a host of other equipment, according to the military blog Oryx, which closely tracks Russian and Ukrainian losses.

Russia also has reportedly turned to Iran to replenish its fleet of drones after steep losses in Ukraine.

	<p>Such damage will likely impact Russia’s military capabilities, perhaps achieving one of the West’s key objectives.</p> <p>On a visit to Kyiv alongside Secretary of State Antony Blinken in April, Mr. Austin said he could see signs of a Russian “weakening” that could curtail Moscow’s ambitions for years.</p> <p>Russia “has already lost a lot of military capability and a lot of its troops, quite frankly,” Mr. Austin said. “We want to see them not have the capability to very quickly reproduce that capability.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 US, China clash again over South China Sea</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/us-destroyer-makes-second-pass-near-disputed-south/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/us-destroyer-makes-second-pass-near-disputed-south/</a>
GIST	<p>A Navy guided-missile destroyer conducted a second freedom of navigation operation in the South China Sea three days after sailing near disputed islands in the northern part of the sea, the Navy’s Seventh Fleet said.</p> <p>The USS Benfold on Saturday sailed close to the disputed Spratly Islands — which China claims as sovereign territory — in the southern part of the waterway where it continued operations, the fleet said in a statement.</p> <p>“This freedom of navigation operation upheld the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea recognized in international law by challenging restrictions on innocent passage imposed by the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Vietnam and Taiwan,” the Navy said of the second operation. “Unlawful and sweeping maritime claims in the South China Sea pose a serious threat to the freedom of the seas, including the freedoms of navigation and overflight, free trade and unimpeded commerce, and freedom of economic opportunity for South China Sea littoral nations.”</p> <p>On July 13, the Benfold passed near the Paracel Islands and China’s military said it had driven the warship out of the area, a charge denied by the Navy in a statement. China’s Maritime Safety Administration announced Friday it would be holding military exercises in a large area in the South China Sea from Sunday to Wednesday, although it was not clear if the exercises were related to the Benfold’s voyage.</p> <p>The earlier passage by the Benfold coincided with the sixth anniversary of an international tribunal that rejected China’s claims to own most of the South China Sea. The strategic waterway is used for an estimated \$3 trillion annually in international trade and large parts of it are contested by nations across East Asia.</p> <p>China’s military has reclaimed what the Pentagon says is an estimated 3,200 acres of disputed islands in both the Paracels and Spratlys.</p> <p>In 2018, the PLA began beefing up resources on the islands by deploying anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles and electronic warfare gear, according to defense officials. U.S. officials say the works contradicted a 2015 pledge by President Xi Jinping that China had no plans to militarize the South China Sea islands.</p> <p>Last week, People’s Liberation Army Air Force Col. Tian Junli said the destroyer passage “seriously violated” Chinese sovereignty and security and undermined peace and stability in the sea.</p> <p>“Facts have once again proved that the U.S. is nothing but a ‘security risk maker in the South China Sea’ and a ‘destroyer of regional peace and stability,’” the spokesman said.</p> <p>The Navy statement said the Benfold operations near the Spratlys were designed to challenge excessive maritime claims under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention that outlines rights and freedoms of use of the sea.</p>

“As long as some countries continue to claim and assert limits on rights that exceed their authority under international law, the United States will continue to defend the rights and freedoms of the sea guaranteed to all,” the Navy said. “No member of the international community should be intimidated or coerced into giving up their rights and freedoms.”

Asked whether Chinese naval forces attempted to force the Benfold out of the South China Sea near the Spratlys, Navy Lt. Nicholas Lingo, a Seventh Fleet spokesman, said: “All interactions with foreign military forces were consistent with international norms and did not impact the operation.

Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam all claim sovereignty over some or all of the Spratlys.

“In violation of international law, the PRC, Vietnam, and Taiwan purport to require either permission or advance notification before a military vessel engages in ‘innocent passage’ through the territorial sea of the relevant feature,” the U.S. statement said.

International law allows for ships of all countries, including warships, to pass through territorial seas.

Also, international law does not permit the unilateral imposition of authorization or advance notification for such warship innocent passage, the basis for the recent Benfold operations, the Navy said.

“All of our operations are safe, professional and in accordance with international law,” the statement said. “These operations demonstrate that the United States will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows — regardless of the location of excessive maritime claims and regardless of current events.”

U.S. defense sources say a Chinese Su-30 jet made a dangerous aerial maneuver near a U.S. C-130 transport aircraft operated by U.S. special operations forces over the South China Sea last month.

The Chinese jet conducted what defense officials called an “unsafe” and “unprofessional” encounter over the sea. The U.S. government protested the unsafe encounter to China, a defense source said.

Pentagon officials declined to comment on the incident, which was first reported by Politico.

Lt. Col. Marty Meiners said Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin noted during remarks at a conference in Singapore recently that the U.S. military has seen “an alarming increase in the number of unsafe aerial intercepts and confrontations at sea by PLA aircraft and vessels.”

Last February, a PLA navy ship fired a laser at an Australian P-8 maritime patrol aircraft that threatened all the crew, Mr. Austin said.

During June, PLA jets had “conducted a series of dangerous intercepts of allied aircraft operating lawfully in the East China and the South China seas. Now this should worry us all,” he said.

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HEADLINE	07/18 DHS panel: no need disinformation board
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/disinformation-board-not-needed-dhs-panel-finds/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/disinformation-board-not-needed-dhs-panel-finds/</a>
GIST	<p>A Homeland Security panel has recommended against the controversial Disinformation Governance Board, calling the body needless.</p> <p>While not final, the recommendation from a Homeland Security Advisory Council subcommittee prompted Republicans on social media to declare victory.</p>

	<p>While the council subcommittee said it had not decided how best to counter disinformation while “protect[ing] civil rights, civil liberties and privacy ... we have concluded there is no need for a Disinformation Governance Board.”</p> <p>Republicans on social media cheered.</p> <p>“DHS decides today there was no need for its unconstitutional Disinformation Board after all,” crowed Sen. Josh Hawley, Missouri Republican, as he posted a screenshot of the DHS group’s final draft report.</p> <p>The Republicans on the House Homeland Security Committee said Monday night that while its members “hate to say we told you so,” they claimed victory.</p> <p>“From its initially botched rollout, the ‘Ministry of Truth’ lacked a defined mission or even direction. It was clear it was a political tool to be wielded by the party in control,” they wrote on their Twitter account.</p> <p>When the proposed disinformation board became a political issue, forcing chair Nina Jankowicz to resign amid accusations that the Biden administration was trying to create an Orwellian ministry, DHS said the board was being “grossly and intentionally mischaracterized.”</p> <p>But the agency said it would pause the board’s operations and conduct a “thorough review.”</p> <p>Reuters news agency requested White House comment Monday night but did not immediately get a response.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 US approves \$108M in military aid to Taiwan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/us-approves-108-million-military-aid-taiwan-amid-t/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/us-approves-108-million-military-aid-taiwan-amid-t/</a>
GIST	<p>The U.S. government has approved another round of military aid to Taiwan amid increasing pressure from communist China, which claims the self-governing island democracy as part of its territory.</p> <p>The State Department on Friday approved the sale of about \$108 million worth of spare and repair parts for tanks and other combat vehicles along with federal and contractor technical and logistic support, according to the Pentagon’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), which has notified Congress of the possible sale.</p> <p>The sale is “consistent with U.S. law and policy” and “serves U.S. national, economic, and security interests by supporting the recipient’s continuing efforts to modernize its armed forces and to maintain a credible defensive capability,” the DSCA said in a statement.</p> <p>In a statement, Taiwan’s Defense Ministry said the proposed sale will “strengthen our defense capabilities and maintain regional peace and stability.”</p> <p>U.S. officials said the sale will help sustain Taiwan’s military vehicles, small arms and combat weapons systems. It also will enhance interoperability with the U.S. and other allies.</p> <p>“The recipient will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment and support into its armed forces,” the DSCA said. “The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.”</p> <p>The U.S. is required by law to provide Taiwan with the military means to defend itself, but Democratic and Republican administrations have traditionally followed a policy of “strategic ambiguity” over whether they would intervene with force to protect Taiwan in the event of an attack by Beijing.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Report: back-to-school mental health crisis</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/educators-brace-back-school-mental-health-crisis-r/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/18/educators-brace-back-school-mental-health-crisis-r/</a>
GIST	<p>Public schools are adding mental health staff and “therapeutic support classrooms” to absorb an expected flood of anxious and depressed students returning next month from two years of virtual learning, according to the tracking website Burbio.</p> <p>Burbio reported that its School Budget Tracker showed a spike in k-12 spending on social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental health services as many school districts prepare for their first full year of in-person learning since before the pandemic.</p> <p>Virginia’s Spotsylvania County Public Schools is adding five full-time equivalent school psychologists and four full-time equivalent employees for health and wellness services.</p> <p>In Massachusetts, the Fall River Public Schools is adding a director of SEL and mental health services, SEL integration specialist, lead family engagement specialist and movement therapist to serve as a “launchpad to increase the number of mental health professionals that are trained to offer specialty therapeutic services.”</p> <p>Idaho’s Post Fall School District has budgeted for a “therapeutic support classroom.” Similarly, South Carolina’s Beaufort County School District is creating a “virtual calming room” with links to exercise and yoga, live animal videos, puzzles, games and crisis hotline resources.</p> <p>California-based psychologist Thomas Plante, a fellow of the American Psychological Association, welcomed the resources as necessary to help teachers and parents who felt overwhelmed during school closures.</p> <p>“Teachers and parents can be trained in mental health first aid, which can help, but many of these issues and challenges are beyond their expertise and there aren’t enough mental health professionals to provide service to all,” Mr. Plante said in an email.</p> <p>The Santa Clara University psychology professor said divisive politics, climate change anxiety, increasing economic insecurity, racial justice protests, toxic social media, school shootings and a lack of stress management skills have added to a growing youth mental health crisis that “may last long after the pandemic.”</p> <p>Both the APA and the U.S. surgeon general have issued warnings about the crisis in recent months.</p> <p>Burbio reported Sunday that schools are also increasing employee salaries and bonuses this fall to address an ongoing shortage of staff ranging from bus drivers to teachers, many of whom quit or retired during the pandemic.</p> <p>In Texas, the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District has approved compensation increases ranging from 6.7% to 12% for paraprofessional and support staff. By comparison, its teachers will receive a 3.9% increase and administrators a 2.6% raise.</p> <p>During the new school year, Cypress-Fairbanks has budgeted an extra \$15 million to hire teachers and paraprofessionals and an extra \$6.2 million to hire elementary and middle school behavioral interventionists and testing coordinators.</p> <p>“In a time of increased inflation and mental health concerns for our children, it is a relief to see that school districts are giving extra compensation to schools,” said Laura Linn Knight, an Arizona-based parenting coach.</p> <p>Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious diseases specialist who teaches at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, said the “residual effect of COVID keeping students at home” is causing “terrific turmoil and anxiety” for many of them.</p>

	<p>The best way to prevent future school closures will be to have more children vaccinated against COVID-19, he added.</p> <p>“We have a large percentage of children who are still not vaccinated. I hope parents will accept COVID vaccinations as well as routine vaccinations for their children when they return to school next month,” Dr. Schaffner said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 ‘Heat apocalypse’ warning western France</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/18/heat-apocalypse-warning-western-france-thousands-flee-wildfire">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/18/heat-apocalypse-warning-western-france-thousands-flee-wildfire</a>
GIST	<p>Meteorologists have warned of a “heat apocalypse” in western France as more than 8,500 further people fled their homes to escape a large wildfire sparked by a searing southern European heatwave that has already caused hundreds of deaths.</p> <p>Nearly 25,000 people have been forced to abandon homes, holiday rentals and campsites for emergency shelters in the Gironde département west of Bordeaux, while blazes in Spain, <a href="#">Portugal</a> and Greece have forced thousands more to flee.</p> <p>Temperatures across southern Europe showed some sign of abating on Monday as the heatwave, during which temperatures have surpassed 40C (104F) across much of the region, moved north, including towards Britain, which was set for its hottest day on record.</p> <p>“It never stops,” said David Brunner, one of 1,500 firefighters battling to control the Gironde blaze, which since Tuesday has destroyed 14,000 hectares of pine forest near the Dune du Pilat, Europe’s highest sand dune and a summer tourism hotspot. “In 30 years of firefighting I have never seen a fire like this.”</p> <p>An area 5.5 miles long (9km) and 5 miles wide was still burning near the dune on Monday, with temperatures in the area forecast to hit 44C.</p> <p>“We’re climate change refugees,” Théo Dayan, 26, told Le Monde after fleeing his home near the village of La Teste-de-Buch. Jean-Luc Gleyze, the head of the local fire service, said: “We’re not reaching out and touching global heating – it’s hitting us full in the face.”</p> <p>France’s interior ministry announced it would send an extra three firefighting planes, 200 firefighters and more trucks. “In some south-western areas it will be a heat apocalypse,” the meteorologist François Gourand told Agence France-Presse.</p> <p>Fifteen départements have been placed on the highest state of alert for extreme temperatures, including Brittany, where the coastal city of Brest was set to hit 40C on Monday, nearly twice its usual average for July.</p> <p>The extreme temperatures of the past week have directly claimed at least four lives in Spain and fanned dozens of wildfires – many still burning – that have seared almost 30,000 hectares (75,000 acres) across the country.</p> <p>As fires continued to burn in Zamora province, video footage shot on a train from Madrid to Galicia on Monday morning showed the service at a temporary standstill as flames and smoke rose from trees on either side of the carriage.</p> <p>“Moments of panic on the Madrid-Ferrol train near Zamora-Sanabria, 9.30am,” Francisco Seoane Pérez, a journalism lecturer, wrote on Twitter. “The train carried on after stopping for a few minutes.”</p> <p>Spain’s national rail company, Renfe, said no passengers had been in danger at any time.</p>



Also on Monday, the regional government of Castilla y León said the body of a 69-year-old man, reported to have been a shepherd, had been found in a burnt-out area near the small town of Escobar de Tábara in Zamora.

The previous day, authorities in the region also confirmed the death of a firefighter, Daniel Gullón Vara, who died fighting the flames in the same province. A 50-year-old man died from heatstroke on Sunday in Torrejón de Ardoz, near Madrid.

A 60-year-old street sweeper died after developing heatstroke while working in Madrid on Friday afternoon, prompting the city council to announce flexible working hours to allow municipal employees to avoid the hottest periods of the day.

In the south of the country, more than 3,200 people fled fires in the Mijas hills, not far from Málaga, though some were able to return later. Spain's Carlos III public health institute said 510 deaths were attributable to the heat between Sunday 10 July and Saturday 16 July - 150 of whom died on Saturday alone.

During a visit to the south-western region of Extremadura on Monday morning, Spain's prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, paid tribute to Gullón Vara and said the events of the previous week were further evidence of the climate crisis.

"I want to make something very clear," he said. "Climate change kills: it kills people, as we've seen; it also kills our ecosystem, our biodiversity, and it also destroys the things we as a society hold dear – our houses, our businesses, our livestock."

The heatwave in Spain, with highs of 45C and record-breaking temperatures across many parts of the country, is forecast to end on Monday.

In neighbouring Portugal – where temperatures hit 47C last week – the fires have been brought under control after destroying 12,000-15,000 hectares of land, killing two people and injuring 60 others.

Temperatures dropped over the weekend, but the risk of wildfires remained very high, according to the Portuguese Institute of Meteorology (IPMA). More than 1,000 firefighters, backed by 285 vehicles and 14 aircraft, were battling nine ongoing wildfires, mainly in the country's northern regions, authorities said.

As the hot air mass pushes north, Belgium and Germany are among the countries expecting the heatwave to hit them in coming days. Britain may also be on course for its hottest day on record.

The government issued a red extreme heat warning for the first time, while trains were cancelled, some schools closed early and ministers urged the public to stay at home.

"We hoped we wouldn't get to this situation, but for the first time ever we are forecasting greater than 40C in the UK," said Nikos Christidis at the Met Office. The country's previous high, 38.7C, was recorded in Cambridge in 2019.

After a report concluded that weather catastrophes triggered by the climate crisis had cost Germany at least €80bn (£68bn) since 2018, Germany's environment minister, Steffi Lemke, said the "horrifying" data showed the "enormous damage" of the climate crisis.

The report, published on Monday and commissioned by the economy and environment ministries, estimated that the financial impact of drought, floods and extreme heat in Germany between 2000 and 2021 was nearly €145bn, most of it in recent years.

"The numbers sound the alarm for more prevention when it comes to the climate," Lemke said. "We have got to and will invest more in climate protection and adaptation to protect our people."

	Heatwaves are happening more often, are more severe, and are lasting longer because of human-induced climate change. The world has warmed by about 1.1C since the start of the industrial era and temperatures will keep rising unless carbon emissions fall sharply.
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Western WA monkeypox cases on rise</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/monkeypox-cases-rise-western-washington/5J3A5QZBZNFKTNQUPYZS2GLT7E/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/monkeypox-cases-rise-western-washington/5J3A5QZBZNFKTNQUPYZS2GLT7E/</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Monkeypox cases continue to rise across the U.S., including here in Washington.</p> <p>As of Monday, King County is reporting 48 cases, according to the Washington State Department of Health.</p> <p>Only 16 cases were confirmed in King County this time last week.</p> <p>Pierce and Snohomish County each have two confirmed cases.</p> <p>In all, there have been <a href="#">53 cases reported in Washington</a>, with one person from out-of-state testing positive here.</p> <p>The virus causes a rash that can look like bumps on your skin, pimples or blisters.</p> <p>Some people report having a flu-like illness before they develop a rash.</p> <p>Infections with the strain of monkeypox virus identified in the recent U.S. outbreak are rarely fatal, and most people should expect to recover in two to four weeks, according to Public Health — Seattle &amp; King County.</p> <p>Anyone who thinks they may have been exposed to monkeypox or has symptoms is urged to contact their healthcare provider.</p> <p>Currently, there is no specific treatment approved for monkeypox.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Homeless camp on private property swept</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/homeless-camp-on-private-property-in-slu-cleared-after-months-of-complaints">https://komonews.com/news/local/homeless-camp-on-private-property-in-slu-cleared-after-months-of-complaints</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - Months of complaints and a series of reports by KOMO News ended with a homeless camp being swept this weekend.</p> <p>The camp was an ongoing source of crime and safety hazards, according to neighbors, but the city was slow to act because it was on private property.</p> <p>The property owner is a development company called Dexter Avenue Development 2 LLC, and its representatives told the city it wasn't equipped to deal with the tents and the issues created by some of the campers.</p> <p>However, the code violations stacked up and the city finally moved in.</p> <p>The property is an asphalt lot along Aurora Ave N that stretches down a hillside to Dexter Ave N in South Lake Union, just north of the Meta headquarters.</p> <p>Kandice, one of the people cleared out from the site, said police turned up the pressure in the past few weeks.</p>

"They were coming by like almost every night, pretty much threatening anybody who had warrants that they were going to use that against them to get them out," said Kandice, who asked that her last name not be used.

Permits have been applied for to build an apartment tower at the site but neighbors said the property owner allowed it to become overrun with tents.

"It's like they have the private property and they don't care what's happening on it but we care," said Jibril Mansour, whose family operates a restaurant nearby called Gyro & More.

Surveillance cameras at the restaurant have captured images of the campers breaking into the business in recent months. Mansour said the latest attempt was two weeks ago.

"We had the back window back here destroyed. They didn't get through the hole in the window but they broke it and shattered it," Mansour said.

A teriyaki restaurant next door has faced similar problems and numerous complaints have been filed, according to the owner.

City officials threatened to impose fines but the property owner asked for more time. In a letter sent last month, Dexter Avenue Development wrote, "The Owner lacks the necessary resources to remove an encampment of this size and nature; we require City/Seattle Police Department ("SPD") assistance. We have filed the necessary paperwork to receive this assistance."

The letter cited other measures already taken, such as demolishing vacant buildings at the site to discourage squatters, hiring private security to conduct patrols, and working with Seattle police to trespass the people living there, which ultimately led to the camp being cleared.

Neighbors are hopeful but said the property owner could have acted much sooner and showed little consideration for the people who live and work in the area.

"They didn't really think of the two family-owned restaurants that are right next to it," Mansour said.

Another complication emerged due to this camp being located on private property. No outreach or offers of help were initiated by the city to the people living there.

A spokesperson with the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections said homeless camps on private property are fairly rare and it is the owner's responsibility to address any concerns.

The city can impose fines for ongoing code violations but no penalties were assessed in this case.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Downtown encampment fire draws scrutiny</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/project-seattle/late-night-fire-near-downtown-seattle-camp-sparks-new-scrutiny-of-site">https://komonews.com/news/project-seattle/late-night-fire-near-downtown-seattle-camp-sparks-new-scrutiny-of-site</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — A late night fire near an encampment last week located on the edge of downtown Seattle has brought renewed attention to the troubled site.</p> <p>No injuries were reported during the Friday night blaze that occurred at the intersection of Mercer Street at Fairview Avenue shortly after 10 p.m., said the Seattle Fire Department, which is still searching for what ignited the blaze and for people to interview who may have information.</p> <p>"The occupant of the encampment left prior to our arrival on scene," a spokesperson told KOMO News in a written statement. "The operations company was unable to determine a cause due to extent of fire</p>

	<p>damage and no occupant to interview. Single tent burned with report of damage also to a nearby electrical box”</p> <p>Police were called to direct traffic in the area after traffic lights in the area stopped working.</p> <p>A Friday night fire at a downtown Seattle encampment has raised new questions about the site.</p> <p>The encampment is located on land owned by the city of Seattle, according to the Washington State Department of Transportation, meaning it will be up to the city to clear the small number of tents that have taken root at the location.</p> <p>No one from the city was immediately available Monday to answer questions about the camp or to talk about if the city has plans to sweep the site.</p> <p>People who live and work in the area said they have seen instances of bad behavior from the campers.</p> <p>"One of the other people that live in my apartment complex said another lady had a knife one time and they're just swinging it around out there," said a resident who spoke to KOMO News on condition of anonymity. "I saw the lady with a bat and she hit a sign with a bat and everything and she was yelling. Just really interesting, they have a lot of fights. It's not very safe out here."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Spokane Shock gear, trophies face auction</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/sports/spokane-shock/spokane-shock-auction/293-87173fc7-df99-442d-a3c8-15f98c086d8c">https://www.krem.com/article/sports/spokane-shock/spokane-shock-auction/293-87173fc7-df99-442d-a3c8-15f98c086d8c</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — More than five months after the Spokane Shock left the team building located in downtown Spokane, a local estate sale company is planning to auction off all Shock gear that was left behind when the team moved out.</p> <p><a href="#">Instant Auction and Estate Sales</a> is planning to auction off hundreds of leftover Spokane Shock items, including jerseys, merchandise, office furniture and trophies.</p> <p>The auction is set to take place on Friday, July 22 at 10 a.m. at the old Spokane Shock building, located at 157 South Howard Street. An auction preview will take place on Thursday, July 21 from noon to 5 p.m., and Friday, July 22 at 9 a.m.</p> <p>No online bidding is allowed for this auction. Items up for sale can be viewed <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The auction comes less than five months after Spokane Shock owner Sam <a href="#">Adams failed to provide the Public Facilities District</a> (PFD), which manages the Spokane Arena, with the \$128,000 security bond needed to play at the arena this season.</p> <p>Because he did not supply the security bond, <a href="#">the Shock's contract with the arena was terminated</a> on Feb. 24. That same day, the Spokane Shock was <a href="#">kicked out of the Indoor Football League</a> (IFL).</p> <p>In two separate Washington State Department of Labor and Industries cases in King County, <a href="#">Adams was ordered to pay workers thousands of dollars in unpaid wages</a>, according to court documents.</p> <p>The cases were filed in Western Washington, where Adams lived at the time of KREM 2's investigation.</p> <p>In one of the cases, a judge issued a warrant in January 2022 calling on Adams to pay \$3,301.94 in unpaid wages to an unnamed employee. Another case obtained by KREM 2 showed a judge ordered Adams to pay another unnamed employee \$6,040.24 in late August 2021.</p> <p>Between those two filings, Adams was ordered to pay a total of \$9,342.18 in unpaid wages.</p>

	<p>In addition to unpaid wages, several <a href="#">Spokane Shock fans told KREM 2 they had difficulty getting a refund for their 2020 season tickets</a>, as the season was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Of the 55 season ticket holders who spoke with KREM 2 via email, 40 of them provided the amount they were owed, which totaled \$18,273.</p> <p>Several people told KREM 2 they started asking for their money back as early as March 2020. Three season ticket holders told KREM 2 they did get their refund, but only after they got their credit card company involved.</p> <p>In a phone call with KREM 2, Adams said he's authorized a number of refunds, claiming the money is being held up by online ticket merchant TicketSpice.</p> <p>In a statement to KREM 2, TicketSpice denied Adams' claim.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Australia trend: flood, evacuate, rain, repeat</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/world/australia/sydney-floods.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/world/australia/sydney-floods.html</a>
GIST	<p>WINDSOR, Australia — Emma Winley pointed to the markings on the outside of her house, recording the levels of the three floods that have hit in the past 16 months.</p> <p>In March of last year, the water came up to her knees. In March of this year, it nearly reached her shoulders. Still rebuilding after that flood, she and her husband hadn't even moved back in when another one hit earlier this month, submerging half the house and going up to her neck — denoted by the film of sludge still smeared on the wall.</p> <p>“They each go up a bit higher,” she said, her voice threatening to break.</p> <p>In the first five days of this month, a storm system deposited 8.7 inches of rain on Sydney, double the month's average rainfall and leading to the <a href="#">wettest July on record</a>. Some surrounding areas received over 30 inches. In what has now become a familiar routine, tens of thousands of people living along the Hawkesbury-Nepean River, west of the city, evacuated. For some towns, it was their third <a href="#">severe flood</a> in the past 16 months. For others, their fourth.</p> <p>Australia's leaders have been quick to praise the <a href="#">“resilience” and community spirit</a> of local residents. But as the cleanup begins again, that resilience is starting to falter. With climate change intensifying <a href="#">extreme weather events</a>, residents must confront the prospect that a constant and exhausting cycle of evacuation, return and months of cleanup will become the new normal.</p> <p>“It feels like you're living on a knife's edge all the time now,” said Linda Gregoriou, another Windsor resident.</p> <p>Windsor, a town of 1,900 an hour northwest of Sydney, sits on a floodplain. Ms. Winley, 54, and her husband, Andy Ryland, 63, knew the risks when they bought their house nearly 15 years ago. They thought they were prepared.</p> <p>The first flood in March 2021 wasn't too bad, Ms. Winley said. She looked for silver linings. It was about time to replace the kitchen anyway, she thought. They refitted the house and replaced the furniture, using up their savings.</p> <p>The second flood, the next year, caught them off guard, and they lost it all again. Now, the third time around, she said, “at least we haven't lost as much — because we'd already lost it all beforehand.”</p>

Australia is a continent [of extremes](#). It has always gone through periods of drought followed by severe flooding. Most residents living on the Hawkesbury-Nepean floodplains can recite by heart the levels of the worst floods to hit the area and compare them with new deluges — the ones last year and this year have fallen well short. It is both a warning and an assurance: This will always happen, and it could always be worse.

But [climate change](#) now adds a complicating factor, with scientists noting that Australia, [like many countries](#), is seeing an intensification of extreme weather. While it's impossible to say how much climate change is responsible for the recent floods, said [Jamie Pittock](#), an environment and society professor at the Australian National University, "all the science points to climate change making this kind of flooding more frequent and worse."

Even for residents who have grown up on floodplains, the latest deluges are something of an anomaly.

Camden, about an hour south of Windsor, has flooded four times this year — twice in March, once in April and again this month. The local lawn bowling club has gone underwater every time. Dennis Crouch, 71, the club's vice president, grew up in the town and said he has never seen it hit by so much flooding, so close together.

"I couldn't blame climate change, I don't know enough about it," he said. But in his mind, something has certainly changed.

"It's pretty freakish," he said.

He doesn't linger on it. "It's gut-wrenching," he said, "but in three weeks we'll be sitting in the clubhouse, drinking beer and forgotten all about it."

But for others, the prospect of another flood looms large. Scientists said there is a 50 percent chance that the La Niña weather pattern that caused the torrential rain earlier this month will return before the end of the year.

With every flood, residents are getting better at recovering. This time, as the river rose and she and her husband evacuated, Ms. Winley was already making a list of what needed to be done upon return. A few days after the water had receded, the cleanup operation was in full swing, and she was making plans to further flood-proof the house.

But the mental toll is showing. Mr. Ryland now gets "twitchy and anxious" in rainstorms, Ms. Winley said. While she once thought that they would grow old together in their house, now she's not so sure.

"I thought this was a home we could be carried out of," she said. "But now I worry that as we get older, we just won't have what it takes to keep rebuilding every time. That's a fear that I haven't addressed yet. That I don't think too hard about."

They're not the only ones questioning their future, and the future of the area.

On the other side of Windsor, Ms. Gregoriou, 57, walked down her street, still cluttered with sodden furniture and debris, pointing out the houses for sale.

"This one's on the market," she said of the house near the end of the street. Then, the next two houses next to it: "This one's for sale. And this one's on the market."

They had all been put up for sale after the March flood, she said. She expected more to follow.

Ms. Gregoriou's house had been inundated too, although not as severely — her street lies on a steep angle. Selling was not on her mind. But she worried about the area's long-term future.



“I love this area, but it’s not sustainable,” she said. “It’s almost like you can’t live a proper life.”

Like many in the area, she is frustrated by what she sees as inaction or poor decisions by local governments, including allowing further development in the floodplains.

On the edge of rapidly expanding Sydney, the Hawkesbury-Nepean floodplain is prime location for new growth. In 2017, a government report projected that its population of 134,000 was expected to double in the next 30 years. Earlier this year, the state government cited the need for affordable housing when it scrapped a requirement for developers to consider the risk of fire and flood.

But building cheaply on floodplains is “a recipe for trapping people in poverty,” said Prof. Pittock. Residents “can’t insure a house on the floodplains. Their house gets destroyed and they can’t sell their house or land so they’re forced to rebuild without insurance in the same place.”

In Camden, Jim and Vicki McGregor were cleaning up after the latest extreme weather submerged their garage and foundation. Their elevated home, however, escaped the flooding.

The couple was mentally drained from successive floods in March, April and July, Ms. McGregor admitted, and worried about future disasters. But they had no plans to move.

“This is our home, first and foremost,” Ms. McGregor, 61, said. “But a flood-affected home doesn’t have a lot of value, as well.”

The floodplain is part of what’s made Camden beautiful, she added, creating the area’s lush open spaces.

“There’s always two sides to it,” she said. “You just have to look at it differently. We’ll get there. Next week will be different.”

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HEADLINE	07/18 Extreme heat puts life on hold in Britain
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/world/europe/uk-london-extreme-heat.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/world/europe/uk-london-extreme-heat.html</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON — Trains slowed to a crawl. Schools and doctors’ offices shut their doors. The British Museum closed its galleries. Buckingham Palace curtailed the changing of the guard. And the government urged people to work from home.</p> <p>Much of Britain took an involuntary siesta on Monday as merciless heat filtered north from a fire-ravaged European Continent, driving temperatures close to triple digits Fahrenheit in many areas and reaching <a href="#">the hottest mark ever recorded in Wales</a>.</p> <p>Authorities placed most of the country under a “red” warning for heat for the first time in history, with the mercury hovering around 100 degrees (37.5 degrees Celsius) across London and the country’s south and Midlands. Britain’s top reading, <a href="#">100.6 Fahrenheit (38.1 Celsius)</a>, did not quite reach the record of 101.7 set in Cambridge in July 2019, but to a sweltering nation, that felt like a distinction without a difference.</p> <p>On the sweltering London Underground — most lines are not air-conditioned — Georgia McQuade, 22, lugged a heavy suitcase as she made her way to Victoria bus station, where she planned to catch a bus home to Paris.</p> <p>“The Tube is really hot right now,” Ms. McQuade said. But she added, “I don’t want to get an Uber, because using cars so much is what caused this heat in the first place.”</p> <p>She expected to encounter even more ferocious temperatures in Paris, as a mass of hot air has baked Italy and Spain over the past week and fanned wildfires in France and other parts of Europe, before spilling across the English Channel.</p>

On Monday, French firefighters were battling two enormous wildfires that had torn through 55 square miles of dry pine forest in southwestern France over the past week, forcing about 16,000 people to evacuate.

For Britain, a nation known for its scudding clouds, frequent showers and temperate weather, the blast-furnace of Arizona-style heat was enough to disrupt much of the country. It even intruded into the political debate during a campaign season.

In the United States and other countries more accustomed to it, such heat might scarcely register. But essential infrastructure in those climates, from schools to public transportation to private homes, has been designed to deal with it, and people's bodies are more acclimated to it.

In Britain, the houses, especially older ones, were built to retain warmth, and their residents are similarly outfitted. Britons, in fact, are famously unprepared for extreme weather of all kinds — whether winter blizzards or summer downpours — and pavement-shimmering heat is no exception.

Some train services were canceled while others ran at reduced speeds for fear that the rails could buckle. Luton Airport, north of London, closed briefly after the heat caused a “defect” in the runway, forcing flights, some from Mediterranean holiday resorts, to divert to other airports.

In London, the cast-iron chains and pedestals of the Hammersmith Bridge on the Thames were wrapped in reflective foil to shield them from the sun. Previous heat waves had caused cracks in the iron to widen, raising fears that the majestic but corroded 19th-century bridge could collapse.

A 14-year-old boy was missing Monday evening and believed to have drowned while swimming in the Thames, according to London's police service, as thousands defied warnings and flocked to stretches of water to escape the heat.

The Royal Air Force halted flights into and out of its largest base as a preventive measure, a spokesman said, because tar on the runway may have melted. Alternative airfields were being used and Air Force operations were not affected, he added.

Officials urged people to use public transportation only if necessary, and to work from home Monday and Tuesday — a plea reminiscent of the depths of the coronavirus pandemic. But few homes have air-conditioning, forcing millions to choose between a torrid commute or a stifling home office.

“Our immediate concern is to get the country through the next 36 hours in as good a shape as possible,” said Kit Malthouse, the cabinet minister overseeing the government's response. Forecasters warned that Tuesday would be even hotter, putting records again at risk.

Mr. Malthouse defended Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who stayed at his country residence, Chequers, and skipped crisis meetings of the cabinet. Mr. Malthouse said he was briefing Mr. Johnson, who announced his resignation after losing the support of his party two weeks ago, about the latest developments.

With the Conservative Party in the thick of a clamorous leadership race to replace Mr. Johnson, the weather has inevitably played into politics. Whatever the temperature, though, combating climate change has fallen well down the list of priorities.

Britain's cost-of-living crisis has, for now at least, elbowed aside the country's ambitious targets to reach net zero in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. During a televised debate, four of the five candidates voiced only tepid endorsements of the policy while one expressed open doubts.

Prince Charles, the heir to Britain's throne and a fervent climate change activist, waded into the debate, declaring on Monday that “those commitments around net zero have never been more vitally important as we all swelter under today's alarming record temperatures across Britain and Europe.”

Blisteringly high temperatures are becoming more common globally, and climate scientists say that the burning of fossil fuels is a significant driver. Some of the recent heat extremes the world has experienced would have been virtually impossible without the influence of human-induced climate change, scientists have found.

Some critics argue that Britons habitually overreact to weather extremes. In February, nine train companies canceled their services when Storm Eunice battered the country with snow, rain, and winds of up to 90 miles per hour. Planes, buses, and ferries were also disrupted.

Still, on Monday, most Britons were dealing with the heat in time-tested ways.

Retailers in Britain reported skyrocketing demand for fans and air-conditioning units. A spokeswoman for John Lewis, one of Britain's largest department stores, said on Sunday that sales of fans were up more than 250 percent in the past week, compared with the same period a year earlier, and air-conditioner sales were up more than 525 percent.

There is little data on how many homes in England have air-conditioning, but the best estimates place it at under 5 percent, according to a 2021 report from Britain's Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy.

Hospitals and nursing homes were a particular concern, officials said, with many older and other vulnerable patients in buildings without air-conditioning. Officials urged schools, in their final week of classes before a break, not to close because it would leave children unsupervised in the heat — a directive that some education districts were ignoring.

For the most part, though, Britons endured it all with stoicism. Mona Suleiman, 45, and her friend, Zaina Al Amin, 40, were waiting for a bus in the afternoon sun and watched the temperature creeping steadily higher.

"I am not worried about myself in this heat," said Ms. Suleiman, who is originally from Eritrea. "But I am worried about my children."

Her apartment gets too hot, she said, and despite being advised to keep her children, 6 and 10, home from summer school, she decided to send them in because she thought it might be cooler there.

Ms. Al Amin said she and Ms. Suleiman, who wore traditional Eritrean dress and head scarves, did not mind the heat in their lightweight cotton clothing. But they worried about boarding the bus. "It's too difficult," she said. "There's not enough air."

Others in London seemed less bothered, like the four artists painting graffiti on a mural wall outside Trellick Tower, a high-rise apartment building. "This is nothing, mate," one said. "I'll be out here again tomorrow."

For a few Londoners, the answer was to head for the beach. Sam Darlaston and Imogen Duffin took a midday train from Victoria Station to the seaside resort of Brighton. The friends, both 28, had made the impulsive decision to take the day off an hour before the train departed.

Mr. Darlaston, a radio host wearing a Hawaiian-themed shirt, said he was glad not to be back in a stuffy studio. "I thought I might have to work," he said, "and sometimes at work you have to wear trousers and a shirt, if you're interviewing someone."

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HEADLINE	07/18 Hidden enemy: Ukrainians aiding Russia
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/world/europe/zelensky-ukraine-russian-spies.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/world/europe/zelensky-ukraine-russian-spies.html</a>

KYIV, Ukraine — Even as it engages in fierce fighting with Russia on the battlefield, Ukraine is also waging war on a different, more shadowy front: rooting out spies and collaborators in government and society who are providing crucial help to the invading forces.

While Ukrainian society as a whole has rallied to the country's defense, Russian sympathizers are reporting the locations of Ukrainian targets like garrisons or ammunition depots, Ukraine's officials say. Priests have sheltered Russian officers and informed on Ukrainian activists in Russian-occupied areas. One official said collaborators had removed explosives from bridges, allowing Russian troops to cross.

The issue was cast into sharp relief on Sunday night when President Volodymyr Zelensky dismissed two senior law enforcement officials, saying they had not been nearly aggressive enough in weeding out traitors. It was the first major reshuffle of his brain trust since the war began.

Hundreds of treason investigations have been opened, Mr. Zelensky said in a televised address after the dismissals, which still must be confirmed by the Parliament, underscoring the depth of a problem that can provide a critical advantage to the enemy. The threat from spies in government, churches and intelligence agencies, and from Russian-leaning citizens in the East, has plagued Ukraine for years, but has become still more acute during the war.

Mr. Zelensky specifically cited Ukraine's security service, an unwieldy force of 27,000 personnel, the largest in Europe. Western allies believe the service has too many areas of operation, leaving it open to corruption, and prone to straying from its spy-hunting role.

"Such an array of crimes against the foundations of the national security of the state, and the connections detected between the employees of the security forces of Ukraine and the special services of Russia, pose very serious questions to the relevant leadership," Mr. Zelensky said.

One of the officials Mr. Zelensky ousted on Sunday was the head of the domestic intelligence agency, Ivan Bakanov, a childhood friend of the president. The other was Iryna Venediktova, Ukraine's prosecutor general. While Mr. Zelensky did not accuse them of betrayal, he suggested they had turned a blind eye to traitors in sensitive positions.

"Actions and any inaction of each official in the security sector and in law enforcement agencies will be evaluated," Mr. Zelensky said.

The deputy head of the president's office, Andriy Smirnov, was more pointed on Monday, saying the two officials were ousted for failing to "cleanse" their agencies of collaborators.

"Everybody for a long time waited for more concrete, and maybe radical results," Mr. Smirnov said. "At the same time, in the sixth month of the war we are still turning up wads of such people."

The intelligence service poses a particular problem for Ukraine because many of its chiefs graduated from K.G.B. schools, said Volodymyr Arieiev, a member of Parliament in an opposition party that accused Mr. Zelensky of inaction on the issue before the dismissals on Sunday.

"Of course, it's not an easy task," Mr. Arieiev said. "They are not walking in the corridors with a badge saying 'I am K.G.B.'"

The United States and its allies have provided vast quantities of intelligence data to Ukraine during the war, but American officials say the officials' dismissals were not due to any mishandling of that information.

The reshuffling of top security positions provided the first outward sign of divisions in Mr. Zelensky's team, which had been remarkably cohesive during the war. Ukrainian media and opposition politicians suggested alternative reasons for the shake-up, including [Ms. Venediktova's rising international profile](#) as

an [aggressive prosecutor of war crimes](#); some officials fear these trials could lead to retaliatory prosecutions of Ukrainian prisoners in Russia's hands.

Mr. Zelensky said that more than 60 prosecutors and domestic intelligence agents had remained in Russian-occupied territory after the invasion and were collaborating with Moscow. He said the authorities had opened 651 criminal investigations of police officers, prosecutors and other security officials.

More than 800 people suspected of engaging in sabotage and reconnaissance for the Russians, many of them civilians, have been detained and handed over to the Security Service of Ukraine since the war began, Yevhinnii Yenin, first deputy minister of internal affairs of Ukraine, said last month.

The Ukrainians recently foiled a Russian plot to target the leadership of the Ukrainian government, Mr. Yenin said. And law enforcement agencies now operate 123 counter-sabotage groups comprising a total of at least 1,500 members, he said.

Out in the villages and towns on the frontline of the war in eastern Ukraine, the most pro-Russian region of the country, soldiers worry continually about the threat posed by enemy sympathizers reporting their positions or helping direct Russian artillery fire.

Russia's battered forces have paused their drive to seize territory in the region, but continue to use their numerical advantage in artillery to [batter Ukrainian towns and military units](#). A renewed offensive is expected before long.

By the height of the fighting for the eastern city of Lysychansk last month, most civilians had fled, but significant portions of those who remained showed open disdain for the Ukrainian defenders. "We are a Russian nation," said one resident in the city's market who declined to provide his name. "You can kill us, but you can't defeat us."

The Kremlin has shut down independent news organizations, feeding a distorted picture of Ukraine and the war to viewers in Russia and sympathizers in eastern Ukraine. But on Monday, one of the most important prewar Russian outlets, TV Rain, resumed broadcasting on YouTube from Riga, Latvia.

Ruslan Osypenko, the police chief of Ukraine's Donetsk region, which has been subjected to increasingly intense artillery attacks, said that tracking and detaining suspected informants was one of his top priorities. His force has a unit dedicated to monitoring social media channels to detect people passing information on military activities and targeting to Russian forces.

Informants are of all types, he said, and often act on the promise of a position in a future, Russian-controlled administration. "They can be young and old," he said in an interview Monday in his temporary base in the city of Pokrovsk. "The Russian special services are working in this direction, we know that."

Mykyta Poturaiev, a Ukrainian lawmaker who recently convened a parliamentary committee to investigate collaboration, said that Orthodox priests loyal to Moscow had given pro-Russian sermons, provided Russians tips on targets, and informed on Ukrainian activists.

"One example is very illustrative," Mr. Poturaiev said. In one Russian-occupied village, he said, a priest helped billet Russian officers in local houses and arranged for a warehouse to store ammunition.

But infiltration of the domestic intelligence service and prosecutors' office — the very agencies that are intended to find and prosecute traitors — is particularly insidious.

In his decree dismissing Mr. Bakanov, Mr. Zelensky cited an article under martial law that pertains to "failure to perform service duties, which led to human casualties or other grave consequences."

The decree did not specify what casualties or consequences, but speculation swirled in Kyiv on Monday that Mr. Bakanov had been ousted for glaring intelligence failures in the first days of the war in the

	<p>southern city of Kherson, which the Russians captured almost without a fight. Local officials in Kherson switched sides, and explosives were removed from bridges around the city, Mr. Arieiev, the opposition member of Parliament said.</p> <p>In late March, Mr. Zelensky <a href="#">stripped two generals of the security service</a> of their ranks, calling them traitors; one was in charge of the Kherson region and the other fled Ukraine on the eve of the invasion, only to be apprehended months later in Serbia, accused of trying to smuggle cash and emeralds into the country.</p> <p>One Parliament member, Oleksiy Honcharenko, who is not affiliated with a party, said of Mr. Zelensky's reference to "grave consequences," "Translation: for the surrender of Kherson."</p> <p>The security service, known by its Ukrainian initials <a href="#">S.B.U.</a>, is the country's main domestic security and intelligence authority, Ukraine's successor to the Soviet-era K.G.B. Its vast size has drawn criticism — by comparison, Britain's <a href="#">MI5</a> has just 4,400 employees, according to the <a href="#">Atlantic Council</a> — and it has long faced calls for reform.</p> <p>Business groups have said that the service shook down companies for bribes and that corrupt agents, compromised and facing possible prosecution, became easy marks for recruitment by Russia.</p> <p>"Surprise, surprise," Serhiy Fursa, an analyst with Dragon Capital, a leading Ukrainian investment bank, wrote on Facebook of Mr. Zelensky's charges of treachery in the service. "What lesson did this war give us? A corrupt man is Putin's best friend."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/18 Gas prices continue to drop in WA</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/gas-prices-continue-to-drop-in-seattle-washington-state-and-nationwide">https://komonews.com/news/local/gas-prices-continue-to-drop-in-seattle-washington-state-and-nationwide</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>SEATTLE — The price of gasoline dropped again this week, falling 9.9 cents to bring the average cost in Seattle to \$5.40 per gallon, according to GasBuddy's survey of 775 stations in the Emerald City.</p> <p>That mark is 27.8 cents a gallon cheaper than a month ago, and \$1.45 a gallon more expensive than a year ago, per GasBuddy.</p> <p>The national average price of diesel has declined 10.8 cents in the last week and stands at \$5.54 per gallon.</p> <p>Nationally, the average price of gas dropped 15.8 cents since last week, bringing the average to \$4.51 a gallon.</p> <p>Tacoma (\$5.10 a gallon, down 12.1 cents from last week), Yakima (\$5.04, down 4.9 cents) and Washington state (\$5.20, down 10.1 cents) all saw lower gas prices as of Sunday as well.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/18 Hospitals over capacity; not just from Covid</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article263582318.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article263582318.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Washington hospital officials on Monday sounded the alarm again about the state's ever-shrinking bed capacity for patients, blamed not entirely on the COVID-19 pandemic but rather problems that have plagued the system for most of the year.</p> <p>Lack of staff, both in hospitals and at skilled nursing facilities, and a growing number of difficult-to-discharge patients are leaving hospitals in a constant state of overcapacity with too few beds for acute care, according to Washington State Hospital Association leaders and various hospital representatives who spoke to reporters Monday.</p> <p>The same problems were addressed at length at the association's briefings in December and January. Since that time, the problems have only increased, officials say.</p>



Dr. Steve Mitchell, medical director for the Washington Medical Coordination Center, said that hospitals in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties “are more strained today than really at any other point since the pandemic began.”

Tacoma-based MultiCare is no exception. Dr. David O’Brien, senior vice president and chief executive for MultiCare South Sound Region, said that hospitals in the area “have been operating at over 100 percent capacity for months,” with about 180 patients stuck in hospitals, unable to discharge because of either lack of capacity at skilled care facilities, or guardianship issues.

If a patient has not appointed a decision maker in a power of attorney document, the only option is a court-appointed guardian, which takes time, according to state interpretation of the law.

A bill that was introduced in Washington state Legislature that would have eased the guardianship rules for transfer didn’t go beyond a public hearing in the House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary, according to the state’s online bill tracker, and health officials are trying to educate the public on why their next visit with a doctor in the emergency department might take place in the hospital lobby or a conference room.

Steve Brooks is chief of Lacey Fire District 3 and president of the Washington State Fire Chief’s Association. Brooks said Monday’s briefing, in which he participated, helped him learn more about “throughput challenges” that result in patients being parked in ambulances awaiting admission.

“The time for transfer or offloading .... I think the record I’ve heard of in my community so far is about 4-1/2 hours,” he said, because there was not inpatient capacity.

“In our region, we’re seeing that routinely that type of the normal capacity of an emergency department is actually taken up” by patients that would normally be in a room. “That is becoming very common practice,” he said.

Taya Briley, Washington State Hospital Association executive vice president, told reporters that they are calling for more temporary, rapid response teams much like used by the state earlier in the pandemic for understaffed care facilities that could help clear some of the backlog, along with other measures. The teams in the past were contracted by the Department of Social and Health Services, hiring from temporary nursing agencies using \$1.3 million in CARES Act funding.

She and others made clear the guardianship rules for transfers remain a significant hurdle.

In the meantime, officials such as Dr. Nathan Schlicher, past president of the Washington State Medical Association and a practicing emergency department physician at St. Joseph Medical Center, implored people to stay safe through the summer.

“The return to life has produced more trauma,” he said, with accidents, gun violence and more, “and we’re seeing increasing pressure on the system.”

He added, “We need help from Olympia and from our leaders to get folks out of the building. Because if overnight we got those 10-20 percent of folks staying in our building out .... our capacity would be a very different conversation, and I might actually get to care for you in an ER bed again, not just the hallway.”

The pandemic’s upending of routine surgeries and the resulting delayed care, additional labor cost to pay for traveling health care staff and supply-chain disruptions have all put financial strains on medical systems, the officials noted Monday.

O’Brien said MultiCare’s reliance on more than 1,000 travelers “comes at a financial premium,” and combined with inflation costs of supplies, the system has lost “about \$300 million” so far this year.

	<p>“This is really an unsustainable situation where we’re seeing increased demand, significant capacity issues that are being amplified by some of the financial challenges,” O’Brien said.</p> <p>While COVID remains an issue, Schlicher described what hospitals are facing as “death by 1,000 cuts.”</p> <p>“It is the small number of COVID patients that we are seeing, it is the 10- to 20-percent long-term stay patients that can be treated somewhere else,” Schlicher said. “It’s the potential of the one or two monkeypox cases down the road. But there’s not a single silver bullet. We need to tackle all of these issues together.”</p> <p>The hospital association said it is planning another briefing later this week focusing on the financial hits hospitals have taken.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Deadly Marburg virus detected in Ghana</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/18/marburg-virus-disease-ghana-africa-who/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/18/marburg-virus-disease-ghana-africa-who/</a>
GIST	<p>After the coronavirus pandemic and the rise of monkeypox cases, news of another virus can trigger nerves globally. The highly infectious Marburg virus has been reported in the West African country of Ghana this week, according to the World Health Organization.</p> <p>Two unrelated people died after testing positive for Marburg in the southern Ashanti region of the country, the WHO said Sunday, confirming lab results from Ghana’s health service. The highly infectious disease is similar to Ebola and has no vaccine.</p> <p>Health officials in the country say they are working to isolate close contacts and mitigate the spread of the virus, and the WHO is marshaling resources and sending specialists to the country.</p> <p>“Health authorities have responded swiftly, getting a head start preparing for a possible outbreak. This is good because without immediate and decisive action, Marburg can easily get out of hand,” said the WHO’s regional director for Africa, Matshidiso Moeti.</p> <p>Fatality rates from the disease can reach nearly 90%, according to the WHO.</p> <p>Here’s what we know about the virus:</p> <p>— — —</p> <p><b>What is the Marburg virus?</b></p> <p>Marburg is a rare but highly infectious viral hemorrhagic fever and is in the same family as Ebola, a better-known virus that has plagued West Africa for years.</p> <p>The Marburg virus is a “genetically unique zoonotic ... RNA virus of the filovirus family,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “The six species of Ebola virus are the only other known members of the filovirus family.”</p> <p>Fatality rates range from 24% to 88%, according to the WHO, depending on the virus strain and quality of case management.</p> <p>Marburg has probably been transmitted to people from African fruit bats as a result of prolonged exposure from people working in mines and caves that have Rousettus bat colonies. It is not an airborne disease.</p> <p>Once someone is infected, the virus can spread easily between humans through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected people such as blood, saliva or urine, as well as on surfaces and materials. Relatives and health workers remain most vulnerable alongside patients, and bodies can remain contagious at burial.</p>

The first cases of the virus were identified in Europe in 1967. Two large outbreaks in Marburg and Frankfurt in Germany, and in Belgrade, Serbia, led to the initial recognition of the disease. At least seven deaths were reported in that outbreak, with the first people infected having been exposed to Ugandan imported African green monkeys or their tissue while conducting lab research, the CDC said.

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### **Where has Marburg been detected?**

The Ghana cases are only the second time Marburg has been detected in West Africa. The first reported case in the region was in Guinea last year. The virus can spread quickly. More than 90 contacts, including health workers and community members, are being monitored in Ghana. The WHO said it has also reached out to neighboring high-risk countries to put them on alert.

Cases of Marburg have previously been reported elsewhere in Africa, including in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The largest outbreak killed more than 200 people in Angola in 2005.

The virus is not known to be native to other continents, such as North America, and the CDC says cases outside Africa are “infrequent.” In 2008, however, a Dutch woman died of Marburg disease after visiting Uganda. An American tourist also contracted the disease after a Uganda trip in 2008 but recovered. Both travelers had visited a well-known cave inhabited by fruit bats in a national park.

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### **What are the symptoms?**

The illness begins “abruptly,” according to the WHO, with a high fever, severe headache and malaise. Muscle aches and cramping pains are also common features.

In Ghana, the two unrelated individuals who died experienced symptoms such as diarrhea, fever, nausea and vomiting. One case was a 26-year-old man who checked into a hospital on June 26 and died a day later. The second was a 51-year-old man who went to hospital on June 28 and died the same day, the WHO said.

In fatal cases, death usually occurs between eight and nine days after onset of the disease and is preceded by severe blood loss and hemorrhaging, and multi-organ dysfunction.

The CDC has also noted that around day five, a non-itchy rash on the chest, back or stomach may occur. Clinical diagnosis of Marburg “can be difficult,” it says, with many of the symptoms similar to other infectious diseases such as malaria or typhoid fever.

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### **Can Marburg be treated?**

There are no vaccines or antiviral treatments approved to treat the Marburg virus.

However, supportive care can improve survival rates such as rehydration with oral or intravenous fluids, maintaining oxygen levels, using drug therapies and treating specific symptoms as they arise. Some health experts say drugs similar to those used for Ebola could be effective.

Some “experimental treatments” for Marburg have been tested in animals but have never been tried in humans, the CDC said.

Virus samples collected from patients to study are an “extreme biohazard risk,” the WHO says, and laboratory testing should be conducted under “maximum biological containment conditions.”

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### **Anything else to know?**

The WHO said this week it is supporting a “joint national investigative team” in Ghana and deploying its own experts to the country. It is also sending personal protective equipment, bolstering disease surveillance and tracing contacts in response to the handful of cases.

More details are likely to be shared at a WHO Africa online briefing scheduled for Thursday.

	<p>“It is a worry that the geographical range of this viral infection appears to have spread. This is a very serious infection with a high mortality rate,” international public health expert and professor Jimmy Whitworth of the London School of Hygiene &amp; Tropical Medicine told The Washington Post on Monday.</p> <p>“It is important to try to understand how the virus got into the human population to cause this outbreak and to stop any further cases. At present, the risk of spread of the outbreak outside of Ashanti region of Ghana is very low,” he added.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Unique pilot program in downtown Seattle</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/city-university-seattle-enacting-pilot-program-address-local-concerns/281-9b931aa9-f124-4ab9-9a90-e61a85adaf57">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/city-university-seattle-enacting-pilot-program-address-local-concerns/281-9b931aa9-f124-4ab9-9a90-e61a85adaf57</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — A unique pilot program in Seattle is combining a couple of concerns in the hopes of a “win-win” solution.</p> <p>“Helping the homeless to find employment and cleaning up the city at the same time is a way to empower people.” said Kathy Cox with <a href="#">City University of Seattle</a>.</p> <p>The school is championing a project that their Enactus team created for a national competition in New York.</p> <p>The City University Enactus team won first place for the early stage competition in April, and is now putting that idea in to action on the streets of Seattle. Enactus is a student organization that brings together college students, academic professionals, and industry leaders to focus on a shared mission of creating a more sustainable world through entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Students started with a needs assessment, and determined two of the cities main issues impacting the community are homelessness and graffiti vandals.</p> <p>The team developed “Project Clean Up” to simultaneously address both issues. The project even studied the correlation between graffiti and crime rates, both of which have increased since the start of the pandemic. Homelessness has also been on the rise and with rising inflation, it was time to put a good idea in to practice.</p> <p>City University of Seattle said the Enactus team is partnering with Uplift Northwest to deploy a startup company in which homeless people in Seattle can train and become employed to clean up graffiti. Uplift Northwest is a Seattle-based nonprofit that was formerly known as the Millionair Club Charity.</p> <p>Since 1921, the organization has provided men and women with life-changing opportunities. Executive Director Gina Hall said their true purpose is to provide dignity and hope.</p> <p>“The average age of the person who comes to Uplift Northwest is 44 years old so providing them with training and a job is empowering them to take control of their lives and make their own decisions.”</p> <p>The organization is excited to implement the new graffiti-cleaning business as it will employ more men and women who may be experiencing poverty and homelessness in the Puget Sound.</p> <p>The pilot project is being funded by several grants, including \$25,000 from the Metropolitan Improvements District and \$50,000 from the National University System, City University's parent company. The team is currently cleaning the Belltown United Neighborhood and hopes to expand the scale and reach with successful implementation over the summer.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Evacuations ordered: wildfire near Chelan</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/evacuations-ordered-wildfire-near-chelan/MAREPOZE7NFLREBMAIPUX4SMFQ/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/evacuations-ordered-wildfire-near-chelan/MAREPOZE7NFLREBMAIPUX4SMFQ/</a>
GIST	<p>Evacuations have been ordered for a wildfire near Chelan, according to Chelan County Emergency Management.</p> <p>A Level 3 evacuation alert, leave now, was issued for 261 Stayman Flats Road, Downie Canyon Road and Hawks Ridge Road.</p> <p>A Level 1 evacuation alert was initially issued for the north side of Stayman Flats Road, from milepost 2 to the end of the road.</p> <p>A Level 1 evacuation was also ordered for the east side of Highway 97A, from the Knapps Tunnel to Downie Canyon Road.</p> <p>Just after 4 p.m., Washington State Department of Natural Resources officials reported the fire had burned 35 acres, and more than four hours later, the fire had grown to 750 acres with 0% containment.</p> <p>The county emergency management has set up an emergency shelter at Chelan High School as evacuation orders will remain in place overnight. People in the area should remain alert, monitor conditions and follow evacuation notices on the <a href="#">Chelan County Emergency Incident Map</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Starbucks CEO: more store safety closings</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/trending/just-beginning-starbucks-ceo-says-many-more-store-closings-tap/PVQOFPI3DRD5FFSFCFO7BBVPX4/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/trending/just-beginning-starbucks-ceo-says-many-more-store-closings-tap/PVQOFPI3DRD5FFSFCFO7BBVPX4/</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Starbucks Corp. Chief Executive Officer Howard Schultz said in a video leaked Monday that more store closings are pending, just five days after the coffee giant confirmed the shuttering of 16 locations due to ongoing safety concerns.</p> <p>“This is just the beginning. There are going to be many more,” Schultz said in the video, in which he appears to be addressing a group of employees, <a href="#">Business Insider</a> reported.</p> <p>Starbucks has previously confirmed plans to close locations in Portland, Oregon; Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Seattle and Washington.</p> <p>Starbucks <a href="#">confirmed the authenticity of the footage to Insider</a> but declined to say when or where the video was recorded. The company also declined to detail which other stores face closure.</p> <p>The video, posted on Twitter, also shows Schulz explaining the closures target stores deemed “not profitable” due to an uptick in what <a href="#">Bloomberg</a> called “safety-related problems,” including crime, homelessness and drug use in store bathrooms.</p> <p>“It has shocked me that one of the primary concerns that our retail partners have is their own personal safety,” Schulz said in the video.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 Monkeypox: weak public health system</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/monkeypox-sexual-health-clinics-struggle-to-test-treat-track-patients/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/monkeypox-sexual-health-clinics-struggle-to-test-treat-track-patients/</a>
GIST	<p>Clinics that treat sexually transmitted diseases — already struggling to contain an explosive increase in infections such as syphilis and gonorrhea — now find themselves on the front lines in the nation's fight to control the <a href="#">rapidly growing monkeypox outbreak</a>.</p> <p>After decades of underfunding and 2-and-a-half years into a pandemic that <a href="#">severely disrupted care</a>, clinic staffers and public health officials say the clinics are ill-equipped for yet another epidemic.</p>

"America does not have what it needs to adequately and totally fight monkeypox," said David Harvey, executive director of the National Coalition of STD Directors. "We are already stretched to capacity."

Monkeypox — a cousin of smallpox — is not technically considered a sexually transmitted infection. But it spreads through close contact and is now being transmitted largely through [networks of men who have sex with men](#).

Because the current monkeypox outbreak causes blisters or pimples on the genitals, many patients are seeking care for what appears to be herpes, syphilis, or another sexually transmitted infection. Patients often prefer to seek care anonymously at public clinics, rather than visit their primary care doctors, because of the stigma of sexually transmitted infections.

Although most people with monkeypox recover on their own in [two to four weeks](#), about 10% need hospital care, said Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine.

The degree of complications from monkeypox "has been much higher than any of us expected," said Dr. Mary Foote, an infectious diseases expert at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, who spoke July 14 during a [webinar presented by the Infectious Diseases Society of America](#).

In addition to severe pain, some people with monkeypox are at risk of permanent scarring. Foote said the pain can be excruciating, making it difficult for patients to swallow, urinate, or have bowel movements.

Sexual health clinics have been stretched so thin that many lack the staff to perform such basic duties as contacting and treating the partners of infected patients.

These clinics are some of the most neglected safety nets of the nation's tattered public health system, which has less authority and flexibility to fight outbreaks today than before the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

With 1,971 monkeypox cases reported since May in the United States — and about 13,340 [around the world](#) — doctors warn the epidemic may have grown too large and diffuse for them to contain.

Dr. Shira Heisler, medical director of the Detroit Public Health STD Clinic, said she's proud of the quality of care she provides but simply doesn't have time to see every patient who needs care. "We just don't have the bodies," she said. "It's a total infrastructure collapse."

Funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to prevent sexually transmitted infections has fallen by almost 10% since 2003, to \$152.5 million this year, even though syphilis cases alone have more than quadrupled in that time. Taking inflation into account, that funding has fallen 41% since 2003, according to an analysis by the National Coalition of STD Directors.

Meanwhile, hundreds of local and state health professionals who trace the origins, track the trajectory and stop the spread of cases reported by sexual health clinics have quit or been replaced since the pandemic began. Some left due to burnout, and others were driven from their jobs by critics protesting unpopular policies on masks and lockdowns. Some federal grants to [strengthen the public health workforce](#) are just now being rolled out.

Data reporting systems have not been updated during the pandemic, in spite of glaring inadequacies it helped reveal. Public health workers still use fax machines to deal with monkeypox cases in Florida and Missouri, public health officials told KHN.

"Even with the advantages of having a test and a vaccine, we still haven't invested enough in the public health system in order for us to respond quickly enough," said Dr. Tao Kwan-Gett, Washington state's chief science officer. Many people "will tell you we have the best health care system in the world. But I



think the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as [the monkeypox] outbreak, shows that the system is broken and needs fixing."

The [White House](#) is distributing hundreds of thousands of monkeypox vaccines now, releasing additional doses as they become available, for a total of nearly 7 million doses within the next year. But Hotez said those vaccine shipments "may not be sufficient."

Some cities are running out of doses shortly after opening their doors. In New York City, where monkeypox cases have [tripled in the past week](#), the vaccine rollout has been plagued by technical glitches; the vaccine website has crashed at least twice. [San Francisco officials](#) said their city is also running low on vaccine supply.

Monkeypox vaccines can effectively prevent infection in people before they're exposed to the virus. Experts believe vaccines may help prevent infection after exposure, as well. But they're most effective if administered within [four days after close contact](#) with a monkeypox patient, said Dr. Trini Mathew, medical director of antimicrobial stewardship and infection prevention and control at Beaumont Hospital in Taylor, Michigan. Vaccines given between four and 14 days of exposure may reduce symptoms but not prevent the disease.

I don't think any health department in America could handle all the STIs that get reported to them. Yet the battered public health system isn't built for speed.

Although monkeypox tests have become [easier to access](#) in recent days, some public health systems don't have enough staff to quickly locate and test patients' partners. And because most health professionals have never managed a case of monkeypox, patients often must make multiple visits before being accurately diagnosed.

Contacting exposed people becomes more complicated if they live across the county or state line, which can require coordinating an outbreak response with additional health departments, said Shawn Kiernan, chief of the communicable disease section for Virginia's Fairfax County Health Department.

Decades of budget cuts have led many sexual health clinics to [limit their hours](#) of operation, making it harder for patients to receive care.

Public health departments have lost key members of their teams in recent years, including highly trained [nurses and outreach specialists](#).

A 2020 KHN-AP analysis found that [at least 38,000 state and local public health jobs](#) have disappeared since the 2008 recession, leaving a tattered workforce to confront America's public health needs — and that was before COVID hit. That investigation found [only 28% of local public health departments](#) have statisticians or epidemiologists, the disease detectives who investigate the source and trajectory of infectious outbreaks.

More than [2.4 million sexually transmitted infections](#) were reported in 2020, according to the CDC. "I don't think any health department in America could handle all the STIs that get reported to them," Kiernan said.

The federal government has spent billions of dollars fighting the COVID pandemic, and some COVID-related grants will be used to expand the overall public health workforce.

But the CDC and Congress often designate funds for specific purposes, said [Lori Tremmel Freeman](#), head of the National Association of County and City Health Officials. "If you have somebody working on COVID, you can't just reassign them to monkeypox using the same bucket of money," Freeman said.

And in some states, that money hasn't yet reached public health departments or sexual health clinics.

The CDC gave Michigan [millions of dollars](#) to strengthen its public health workforce, but the Michigan Legislature appropriated only a portion of the money. Heisler wrote to multiple state legislators begging them to free up the remaining funds. None replied to her.

Public health workers say they hope monkeypox will be a wake-up call.

"I hope this drives home the need for more investing in public health infrastructure," said Kwan-Gett of the Washington state health department, "because without that investment, this is just going to happen again and again."

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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 Europe cases triple, hospitalizations double</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/covid-triples-europe-hospitalizations-double-87056254">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/covid-triples-europe-hospitalizations-double-87056254</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON -- The World Health Organization said Tuesday that coronavirus cases have tripled across Europe in the past six weeks, accounting for nearly half of all infections globally. Hospitalization rates have also doubled, although intensive care admissions have remained low.</p> <p>In a statement on Tuesday, WHO's Europe director Dr. Hans Kluge described COVID-19 as “a nasty and potentially deadly illness” that people should not underestimate. He said super-infectious relatives of the omicron variant were driving new waves of disease across the continent and that repeat infections could potentially lead to long COVID.</p> <p>“With rising cases we’re also seeing a rise in hospitalizations, which are only set to increase further in the autumn and winter months,” Kluge said. “This forecast presents a huge challenge to the health workforce in country after country, already under enormous pressure dealing with unrelenting crises since 2020.”</p> <p>Earlier this week, editors of two British medical journals said that at no other time in the country's National Health Service have so many parts of it been so close to collapse.</p> <p>Kamran Abbasi, of the BMJ and Alastair McLellan of the Health Service Journal wrote in a joint editorial that the U.K. government was failing to address persistent problems worsened by COVID, including the queuing of ambulances outside hospitals too overloaded to accept new patients.</p> <p>They slammed the government's insistence that vaccines have broken the link between infections and hospitalizations. Although vaccines dramatically reduce the chances of severe disease and death, they have not made a significant dent on transmission.</p> <p>“The government must stop gaslighting the public and be honest about the threat the pandemic still poses to them and the National Health Service,” the editors wrote.</p> <p>In WHO's autumn strategy for COVID-19 released on Tuesday, the U.N. health agency called for measures including a second booster dose for anyone with weak immune systems aged 5 and over, promoting mask-wearing indoors and on public transportation and better ventilation in places including schools and offices.</p> <p>He said southern hemisphere countries were currently experiencing a very active flu season that combined with COVID, was straining health systems.</p> <p>“We are likely to see a similar scenario in the northern hemisphere,” Kluge said, warning that increased pressure could lead to business, travel and school chaos.</p> <p>He urged people to make their own decisions, even in countries where authorities have largely abandoned coronavirus restrictions.</p>

	“We’re all aware of the tools we have to keep ourselves safe, assess our level of risk and take the necessary steps to protect others if we get infected,” Kluge said. “Just because a mask isn’t mandated doesn’t mean it’s prohibited.”
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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 China ground-zero auto chip shortage</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/how-china-became-ground-zero-auto-chip-shortage-2022-07-18/">https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/how-china-became-ground-zero-auto-chip-shortage-2022-07-18/</a>
GIST	<p>TAIPEI/SHANGHAI/SINGAPORE, July 19 (Reuters) - From his small office in Singapore, Kelvin Pang is ready to wager a \$23 million payday that the worst of the chip shortage is not over for automakers – at least in China.</p> <p>Pang has bought 62,000 microcontrollers, chips that help control a range of functions from car engines and transmissions to electric vehicle power systems and charging, which cost the original buyer \$23.80 each in Germany.</p> <p>He's now looking to sell them to auto suppliers in the Chinese tech hub of Shenzhen for \$375 apiece. He says he has turned down offers for \$100 each, or \$6.2 million for the whole bundle, which is small enough to fit in the back seat of a car and is packed for now in a warehouse in Hong Kong.</p> <p>"The automakers have to eat," Pang told Reuters. "We can afford to wait."</p> <p>The 58-year-old, who declined to say what he himself had paid for the microcontrollers (MCUs), makes a living trading excess electronics inventory that would otherwise be scrapped, connecting buyers in China with sellers abroad.</p> <p>The global chip shortage over the past two years - caused by pandemic supply chaos combined with booming demand - has transformed what had been a high-volume, low-margin trade into one with the potential for wealth-spinning deals, he says.</p> <p>Automotive chip order times remain long around the world, but brokers like Pang and thousands like him are focusing on China, which has become ground zero for a crunch that the rest of the industry is gradually moving beyond.</p> <p>Globally, new orders are backed up by an average of about a year, according to a Reuters survey of 100 automotive chips produced by the five leading manufacturers.</p> <p>To counter the supply squeeze, global automakers like General Motors Co (GM.N), Ford Motor Co (F.N) and Nissan Motor Co (7201.T) have moved to secure better access through a playbook that has included negotiating directly with chipmakers, paying more per part and accepting more inventory.</p> <p>For China though, the outlook is bleaker, according to interviews with more than 20 people involved in the trade from automakers, suppliers and brokers to experts at China's government-affiliated auto research institute CATARC.</p> <p>Despite being the world's largest producer of cars, and leader in electric vehicles (EVs), China relies almost entirely on chips imported from Europe, the United States and Taiwan. Supply strains have been compounded by a zero-COVID lockdown in auto hub Shanghai that ended last month.</p> <p>As a result, the shortage is more acute than elsewhere and threatens to curb the nation's EV momentum, according to CATARC, the China Automotive Technology and Research Center. A fledgling domestic chipmaking industry is unlikely to be in a position to cope with demand within the next two to three years, it says.</p>

Pang, for his part, sees China's shortage continuing through 2023 and deems it dangerous to hold inventory after that. The one risk to that view, he says: a sharper economic slowdown that could depress demand earlier.

#### FORECASTS 'HARDLY POSSIBLE'

Computer chips, or semiconductors, are used in the thousands in every conventional and electric vehicle. They help control everything from deploying airbags and automating emergency braking to entertainment systems and navigation.

The Reuters survey conducted in June took a sample of chips, produced by Infineon, Texas Instruments, NXP, STMicroelectronics and Renesas, which perform a diverse range of functions in cars.

New orders via distributors are on hold for an average lead time of 49 weeks – deep into 2023, according to the analysis, which provides a snapshot of the global shortage though not a regional breakdown. Lead times range from 6 to 198 weeks.

German chipmaker Infineon (IFXGn.DE) told Reuters it is "rigorously investing and expanding manufacturing capacities worldwide" but said shortages may last until 2023 for chips outsourced to foundries.

"Since the geopolitical and macroeconomic situation has deteriorated in recent months, reliable assessments regarding the end of the present shortages are hardly possible right now," Infineon said in a statement.

Taiwan chipmaker United Microelectronics Corp (2303.TW) told Reuters it has been able to reallocate some capacity to auto chips due to weaker demand in other segments. "On the whole, it is still challenging for us to meet the aggregate demand from customers," the company said.

TrendForce analyst Galen Tseng told Reuters that if auto suppliers needed 100 PMIC chips - which regulate voltage from the battery to more than 100 applications in an average car - they were currently only getting around 80.

#### URGENTLY SEEKING CHIPS

The tight supply conditions in China contrast with the improved supply outlook for global automakers. Volkswagen, for example, said in late June it expected chip shortages to ease in the second half of the year. [read more](#)

The chairman of Chinese EV maker Nio, William Li, said last month it was hard to predict which chips would be in short supply. Nio regularly updates its "risky chip list" to avoid shortages of any of the more than 1,000 chips needed to run production.

In late May, Chinese EV maker Xpeng Motors (9868.HK) pleaded for chips with an online video featuring a Pokemon toy that had also sold out in China. The bobbing duck-like character waves two signs: "urgently seeking" and "chips."

"As the car supply chain gradually recovers, this video captures our supply-chain team's current condition," Xpeng CEO He Xiaopeng posted on Weibo, saying his company was struggling to secure "cheap chips" needed to build cars.

#### ALL ROADS LEAD TO SHENZHEN

The scramble for workarounds has led automakers and suppliers to China's main chip trading hub of Shenzhen and the "gray market", brokered supplies legally sold but not authorized by the original manufacturer, according to two people familiar with the trade at a Chinese EV maker and an auto supplier.

The gray market carries risks because chips are sometimes recycled, improperly labeled, or stored in conditions that leave them damaged.

"Brokers are very dangerous," said Masatsune Yamaji, research director at Gartner, adding that their prices were 10 to 20 times higher. "But in the current situation, many chip buyers need to depend on the brokers because the authorized supply chain cannot support the customers, especially the small customers in automotive or industrial electronics."

Pang said many Shenzhen brokers were newcomers drawn by the spike in prices but unfamiliar with the technology they were buying and selling. "They only know the part number. I ask them: Do you know what this does in the car? They have no idea."

While the volume held by brokers is hard to quantify, analysts say it is far from enough to meet demand.

"It's not like all the chips are somewhere hidden and you just need to bring them to the market," said Ondrej Burkacky, senior partner at McKinsey.

When supply normalizes, there may be an asset bubble in the inventories of unsold chips sitting in Shenzhen, analysts and brokers cautioned.

"We can't hold on for too long, but the automakers can't hold on either," Pang said.

#### CHINESE SELF-SUFFICIENCY

China, where advanced chip design and manufacturing still lag overseas rivals, is investing to decrease its reliance on foreign chips. But that will not be easy, especially given the stringent requirements for auto-grade chips.

MCUs make up about 30% of the total chip costs in a car, but they are also the hardest category for China to achieve self-sufficiency in, said Li Xudong, senior manager at CATARC, adding that domestic players had only entered the lower end of the market with chips used in air conditioning and seating controls.

"I don't think the problem can be solved in two to three years," CATARC chief engineer Huang Yonghe said in May. "We are relying on other countries, with 95% of the wafers imported."

Chinese EV maker BYD, which has started to design and manufacture IGBT transistor chips, is emerging as a domestic alternative, CATARC's Li said.

"For a long time, China has seen its inability to be totally independent on chip production as a major security weakness," said Victor Shih, professor of political science at the University of California, San Diego.

With time, China could build a strong domestic industry as it did when it identified battery production as a national priority, Shih added.

"It led to a lot of waste, a lot of failures, but then it also led to two or three giants that now dominate the global market."

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## Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	07/18 Breach: India flight booking site Cleartrip
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/indian-flight-booking-site-cleartrip-announces-data-breach/">https://therecord.media/indian-flight-booking-site-cleartrip-announces-data-breach/</a>
GIST	Popular Indian flight booking site Cleartrip announced a data breach on Monday involving the information of an unknown number of victims.

The site, which is owned by e-commerce giant FlipKart, told The Record that it is still conducting an investigation into the issue and has hired an outside forensic firm to help with the situation. FlipKart's majority owner is Walmart.

"The investigation so far has indicated that limited information like name, email id and phone number are suspected to have been impacted," a company spokesperson said.

The company added that cyber authorities in India have been contacted and that they are preparing legal action in the event that it is necessary.

The company sent customers an email on Monday informing them of the data breach.

Cleartrip said a "security anomaly" gave hackers "unauthorized access to a part of Cleartrip's internal systems."

Cleartrip representatives did not answer questions about when the breach occurred, how many victims were involved and whether any vulnerabilities in their platform were resolved.

Security researcher Sunny Nehra shared screenshots on Twitter of stolen files a hacker posted to a private forum. The hacker's files included troves of data on customers and vendors.

The information shown in the screenshot indicates the hack took place recently, with several file names referencing May 2022.

Companies involved in the airline industry in India have been frequent targets for hackers in recent years.

In May, hundreds of people were stranded at airports across India after the SpiceJet airline reported that it was [hit with a ransomware attack](#). In 2020, TechCrunch [reported](#) that a security researcher managed to hack into SpiceJet's systems and gained access to the information of 1.2 million passengers, including several government officials.

India's national carrier Air India [said in May 2021](#) that a data breach at one of its software providers exposed the personal information of more than 4.5 million passengers that used its services.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 APT29 hackers use Google Drive, Dropbox</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cyberscoop.com/apt29-google-drive-malware-spearphishing/">https://www.cyberscoop.com/apt29-google-drive-malware-spearphishing/</a>
GIST	<p>The state-backed Russian hacking team behind some of the biggest digital intrusions in recent years has been using both Google Drive and Dropbox to deliver malware against a range of targets, researchers said Tuesday.</p> <p>Researchers with <a href="#">Palo Alto Networks' Unit 42 threat intelligence team said Tuesday</a> that the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) hacking unit — known as Cloaked Ursa by Unit 42, but more generally as APT29 or Nobelium or Cozy Bear — had previously used legitimate cloud services such as Dropbox as part of malware delivery efforts.</p> <p>But in a series of spear phishing attacks dating back to early May, the hackers have demonstrated "sophistication and the ability to rapidly integrate popular cloud storage services to avoid detection," most notably by mixing Google Drive's cloud storage services into their mix.</p> <p>"This is a new tactic for this actor and one that proves challenging to detect due to the ubiquitous nature of these services and the fact that they are trusted by millions of customers worldwide," the researchers said. "When the use of trusted services is combined with encryption, as we see here, it becomes extremely difficult for organizations to detect malicious activity in connection with the campaign."</p>



Dropbox and other cloud and web services such as project management app Trello and Google's Firebase app development platform aren't new to the APT29 playbook, as documented in [April 2022 by Mandiant](#) and [May 2021 by the Microsoft Threat Intelligence Center](#). But adding Google Drive brings an additional layer of threat.

"Google's ubiquity, combined with the trust that millions of customers worldwide have in them, make their inclusion into this APT's malware delivery process exceptionally concerning," the researchers said. The findings highlight the ongoing potent threat of APT29, which the U.S. government has [blamed for the SolarWinds hack](#), for instance, [one of the worst](#) hacks on record.

"Google's Threat Analysis Group tracks APT 29's activity closely and regularly exchanges information with other threat intelligence teams, such as Palo Alto Networks, for the good of the ecosystem," Shane Huntley, senior director of Google's Threat Analysis Group, told CyberScoop in an emailed statement. "In this case, we were aware of the activity identified in this report, and had already proactively taken steps to protect any potential targets."

A Dropbox spokesperson told CyberScoop the company "worked with our industry partners and the researchers on this matter, and disabled user accounts immediately. If we detect any user violating our terms of service, we take appropriate action, which may include suspending or disabling user accounts."

The latest hacking campaigns highlighted by Unit 42 targeted several unnamed "Western diplomatic missions" between May and June 2022 using what appears to be compromised email accounts within foreign embassies of Portugal and Brazil. On May 13, cybersecurity firm [Cluster25 reported Cloaked Ursa activity](#) involving Dropbox.

Building off that the researchers identified an additional campaign May 24 which consisted of two emails to the same unnamed NATO country's ministry of foreign affairs just a few hours apart.

Both contained a malicious document titled "Agenda.pdf," which linked to an agenda for an upcoming meeting with an ambassador in Portugal. The researchers said they aren't sure why the emails were sent back to back, but one reason could be that the recipient could not access the file in Dropbox.

"Regardless of the reason, the actors were compelled to rapidly build and send a second spear phishing email the same day with a link to an EnvyScout HTML file with the same name hosted on a legitimate website," they said. [EnvyScout](#) is a malicious [dropper](#) used to get additional malware onto the targeted system.

Metadata associated with the file allowed the Unit 42 researchers to find yet another Cloaked Ursa campaign dated to June 30. This campaign a similar lure of discussing a diplomatic visit, this time with a reference to an unnamed foreign embassy in Brazil. Notably, the hackers misspelled Brazil as "Brzail" in the document.

The researchers reiterated that the ubiquity of Google Drive, Dropbox and other popular cloud services, that "are trusted by millions of customers worldwide," means that "all organizations [should] review their email policies" and the details included in the report to address the threat.

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HEADLINE	07/18 Summit: address unfilled cybersecurity jobs
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/careers/white-house-to-hold-summit-on-addressing-the-thousands-of-unfilled-cybersecurity-jobs">https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/careers/white-house-to-hold-summit-on-addressing-the-thousands-of-unfilled-cybersecurity-jobs</a>
GIST	The Biden administration has already hosted expansive summits on ransomware and open-source software security. Now it's taking a similar approach in an attempt to tackle problems in the cybersecurity workforce.

On Tuesday, the White House will bring experts, private sector companies and federal agencies together to brainstorm around one of the most pressing challenges in cybersecurity: people or, more accurately, the lack of them.

The meeting will be led by National Cyber Director Chris Inglis and includes leadership from the Departments of Homeland Security, Commerce and Labor, as well as Jen Easterly, director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency; Anne Neuberger, White House deputy national security advisor for cyber and emerging technology; Susan Rice, director of the Domestic Policy Council; and James Kvaal, undersecretary of education.

While the total number varies depending on the source, most estimates peg the shortage of qualified cybersecurity workers in the hundreds of thousands. CyberSeek, a non-profit organization backed by the National Institute for Cybersecurity Education that maps job openings, currently flags more than 714,000 open or unfilled cybersecurity positions around the country. It's a problem that impacts both governments and businesses alike and is happening as both sectors are attempting to coalesce around ambitious long-term plans to increase the resiliency of systems and data against nation-state and criminal hackers alike.

"With approximately 700,000 cybersecurity positions open, America faces a national security challenge that must be tackled aggressive. During the summit, participants will help chart a path toward a more secure future in which all Americans have the opportunity to raise the bar on cybersecurity through greater awareness, education, and training," the White House said in the announcement. "The summit will also serve as a call to action — to ensure that all Americans can capitalize on the benefits of the digital domain and to ensure that our nation carries through on the positive opportunities ahead of us."

They will be joined by executives from the private sector and experts from academia and the cyber community, though the White House says more announcements on that front are forthcoming. Thus far, SC Media has confirmed that Barbara Massa, executive vice president of business operations at Mandiant, will be in attendance, as will Heather Adkins, vice president of security engineering at Google. A Microsoft spokesperson declined to comment and directed SC Media to the White House.

The summit will focus on three core challenges that have kept the supply of cybersecurity talent from keeping up with demand. One is finding a way to better utilize trade schools, apprenticeships, community colleges and other non-traditional educational institutions to create new skill-based pathways into a cybersecurity career. Another will look at tapping into underserved and diverse communities, including [women](#) and [people of color](#), who have long been underrepresented in the field and industry leaders are working to make the field more welcoming to other backgrounds.

Finally, the meeting will look at how to invest wisely in educational initiatives to ensure American workers are trained to succeed and stay secure in a digital economy, regardless of whether they work directly in cybersecurity or other fields. While more cyber practitioners are badly needed, a massive part of any organization's attack surface comes from the actions and decisions of their non-cyber employees, who can often upend millions of dollars in security spending by clicking on a malicious link.

As Inglis [put it](#) earlier this year when discussing the need for fundamental skills up and down the workforce: "We don't necessarily need to make [everyone] a python programmer — but that we make them cyber aware."

Boosting the national cyber workforce has been a long-held goal for the Biden administration as well as its predecessor, the Trump administration. There are few, if any, straightforward solutions to the problem, at least in the short-term. More and more of our national infrastructure is being put under the control or direction of potentially vulnerable software, or connected to the internet, where it's within reach for state-backed or criminal hacking groups. But the often highly technical work needed to secure those systems is being carried out by an increasingly smaller proportion of the workforce.

There is no easy method to quickly teach or acclimate new workers the fundamentals of cybersecurity or the IT and networking principles that underpin them. That means that even as companies and agencies are

desperate to fill open roles, they're often not willing to put the security of their organization or its customers in the hands of a novice.

Some have questioned whether untrained or undertrained cybersecurity workers would ultimately be a net boon or drag on companies remains an active debate.

Jake Williams, a former hacker at the National Security Agency and current executive director of threat intelligence at Scythe, has argued that putting untrained or lightly trained cybersecurity workers on the job is irresponsible and wouldn't be accepted in other fields where safety and competence are considered core priorities.

"Your airline pilot started in a single engine Cessna. Nobody called it gatekeeping. And before that, they learned lots of 'mostly irrelevant' facts in ground training," Williams [remarked](#) last week on Twitter. "Cyber is one of the only fields where we pretend that skipping the basics is okay to put butts in seats."

In an email, Williams told SC Media he thinks the government and military actually do a very good job of recruiting and training cyber employees but "for the commercial workforce, the situation is a bit more bleak." That's in part due to what Williams, who is also a senior instructor in digital forensics at the SANS Institute, characterized as the poor state of many commercial cybersecurity training programs that churn out degrees without ensuring that graduates are being properly schooled on the fundamentals of IT security that they require before they can be trusted with protecting an organization's sensitive data.

"Those trying to break into the cybersecurity field, often lament that employers need to 'be realistic about skills' and 'take a chance on someone with passion to learn.' The unfortunate reality is that [small and medium-sized businesses], many of which are making their first security hire, simply cannot afford to hire people without a broader cross section of security knowledge and/or experience. This leaves a disconnect between expectations and reality for many cybersecurity bootcamp graduates.

Others have called for the country to respond with a mass mobilization effort to train a generation of cybersecurity workers and put them in a position to gain experience as they work. James Lewis, senior vice president and director of the strategic technologies program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said [last month](#) that the U.S. is not "serious" about solving the cyber workforce shortage and won't get anywhere near closing the gap by relying on slower, more traditional means of education or training.

He drew a comparison to efforts by the U.S. military during World War II to train an [entire generation of pilots](#) to compete with Germany, Japan and others for dominance of the skies. There is no initiative on the part of policymakers to do something similar with cybersecurity, while shortages and competition with the private sector for qualified workers only continues to grow.

"You need to create a pipeline, you need to put untrained bodies at the front, and you need to have pilots come out the other end, and you need to do that at scale and we're not doing that," Lewis said.

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HEADLINE	07/18 Report: TikTok excessive data collection
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/tiktok-engaging-in-excessive-data/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/tiktok-engaging-in-excessive-data/</a>
GIST	<p>TikTok has been engaging in excessive data collection and connecting to mainland China-based infrastructure, <a href="#">Internet 2.0</a> has claimed in a new white paper.</p> <p>The latest report, overseen by Internet 2.0's head security engineer Thomas Perkins, is an analysis of "the source code of TikTok mobile applications Android 25.1.3 as well as IOS 25.1.1", with Internet 2.0 carrying out static and dynamic testing between 1 July to 12 July 2022 that focused on device and user data collection.</p> <p>The report identified multiple instances of unwarranted data harvesting, including:</p>

- Device mapping
- Hourly monitoring of device location
- Persistent calendar access
- Continuous requests for access to contacts
- Device information

Intensifying the overreach issue is the sheer number of users on TikTok and its prominent market position, where according to the report the application has over 1 billion active users globally as of September 2021. The whitepaper goes on to note that TikTok IOS 25.1.1 has a server connection to mainland China, which Internet 2.0 believe is run by Chinese cyber security and data company Guizhou Baishan Cloud Technology Co., Ltd. Despite TikTok asserting that user data is stored in Singapore and the US, the report found evidence of “many subdomains in the IOS application resolving all around the world”. This included Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne (Australia), Utama and Jakarta (Indonesia), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), and Baishan (China). The report’s analysis could not confidently determine “the purpose for the China Server connection or where user data is stored.”

The paper concluded by stating that for TikTok to operate effectively, most of the observed access and device data collection is unnecessary, with the application able to run successfully “without any of this data being gathered.” From this, Internet 2.0 deduced that the sole purpose this information is being collected is for data harvesting. The report’s conclusion also noted the application’s persistent behaviour of asking for users to reverse their preference decisions to access sought-after data.

Internet 2.0 put all of their research to TikTok for comment and verification. However, the application company refused to go on the record about the details of their China-based infrastructure.

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HEADLINE	07/18 APT groups clever Twitter scheme
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hackread.com/apt-groups-trapping-targets-clever-twitter-scheme/">https://www.hackread.com/apt-groups-trapping-targets-clever-twitter-scheme/</a>
GIST	<p>Proofpoint cybersecurity researchers have released a shocking <a href="#">report</a> on how state-backed hackers employ novel tactics to carry out data breaches and trap their targets. Reportedly, threat actors allegedly affiliated with the Chinese, Iranian, and Turkish governments are posing as Twitter employees and journalists.</p> <p><b>Turkish Hackers</b></p> <p>As per the report, an Advanced Persistent Threat (<a href="#">APT</a>) group identified as TA482 sends phishing emails to infiltrate the computer systems of their targets (mainly US journalists/media outlets) and obtain sensitive data.</p> <p>Turkish hackers primarily target journalists to steal their social media accounts. Proofpoint researchers revealed that TA482 used fake Twitter messages in one instance. The victim was notified about a ‘New Login’ attempt in Moscow, Russia, and requested them to click on a URL to change the password. However, those who clicked got their accounts hijacked.</p> <p><b>Iranian Hackers</b></p> <p>Iranian hackers were identified as <a href="#">TA453</a> (aka Cobalt Illusion, also known as Charming Kitten, Phosphorus, APT35, and Newscaster). The group created reporter personas to breach the email accounts of foreign affairs policy experts from the Middle East and academics. They sent emails to their victims, one of which read:</p> <p>“My name is Amy Duncan and I’m a senior reporter with Metro newspaper. I would be most grateful if I could have an interview with you.”</p> <p>The hacker sent multiple follow-up emails and even sent the academic an invitation for a video call containing a link that <a href="#">redirected to a login page</a>.</p>

	<p>According to Proofpoint's <a href="#">blog post</a>, hackers posed as journalists from credible news outlets, such as The Guardian, Fox News, and iNews. Proofpoint researcher explained that TA453 frequently masquerades as journalists to fulfill their malicious objectives and support the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.</p> <p><b>Chinese Hackers</b></p> <p>Chinese hackers' objectives are mainly espionage-related. Proofpoint noticed <a href="#">TA412, aka Zirconium</a>, to be particularly active in targeting US-based journalists since early 2021. They sent their targets emails containing web beacons or tracking pixels.</p> <p>The group identified by Proofpoint specializes in stealth campaigns and is skilled enough to tweak the email dangles to lure targets. Another <a href="#">APT group TA459</a> surfaced in April 2022 and targeted media personnel with emails embedded with a malicious Royal Road RTF attachment, which installed/executed Chinoxy malware when opened.</p> <p><b>Why are Journalists Targeted?</b></p> <p>Researchers wrote that these tactics are used to succeed in their <a href="#">malicious objectives</a>. Their target is the media sector, mainly because the risk of failure is comparatively low. Regardless of their affiliation, hackers have frequently targeted media organizations and journalists to manipulate public perceptions or collect sensitive data.</p>
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HEADLINE	07/19 CloudMensis malware backdoors Macs
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-cloudmentis-malware-used-to-spy-on-macs-in-targeted-attacks/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-cloudmentis-malware-used-to-spy-on-macs-in-targeted-attacks/</a>
GIST	<p>Unknown threat actors are using previously undetected malware to backdoor macOS devices and exfiltrate information in a highly targeted series of attacks.</p> <p>ESET researchers first spotted the new malware in April 2022 and named it CloudMensis because it uses pCloud, Yandex Disk, and Dropbox public cloud storage services for command-and-control (C2) communication.</p> <p>CloudMensis' capabilities clearly show that its operators' main goal is to collect sensitive info from infected Macs through various means.</p> <p>These include screenshots, exfiltration of documents and keystrokes, as well as listing email messages, attachments, and files stored from removable storage.</p> <p>The malware comes with support for dozens of commands, allowing its operators to perform a long list of actions on infected Macs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change values in the CloudMensis configuration: cloud storage providers and authentication tokens, file extensions deemed interesting, polling frequency of cloud storage, etc.</li> <li>• List running processes</li> <li>• Start a screen capture</li> <li>• List email messages and attachments</li> <li>• List files from removable storage</li> <li>• Run shell commands and upload the output to cloud storage</li> <li>• Download and execute arbitrary files</li> </ul> <p>Based on ESET's analysis, the attackers infected the first Mac with CloudMensis on February 4, 2022. Since then, they've only sporadically used the backdoor to target and compromise other Macs, hinting at the campaign's highly targeted nature.</p> <p>The infection vector is also unknown, and the attackers' Objective-C coding abilities also show they're unfamiliar with the macOS platform.</p>

"We still do not know how CloudMensis is initially distributed and who the targets are," ESET researcher Marc-Etienne Léveillé said.

"The general quality of the code and lack of obfuscation shows the authors may not be very familiar with Mac development and are not so advanced.

"Nonetheless, a lot of resources were put into making CloudMensis a powerful spying tool and a menace to potential targets."

### **Bypassing privacy protections**

After being deployed on a Mac, CloudMensis can also bypass the macOS Transparency Consent and Control (TCC) system, which prompts the user to grant apps permission to take screen captures or monitor keyboard events.

TCC is designed to block macOS apps from accessing sensitive user data by enabling macOS users to configure privacy settings for apps installed on their systems and devices connected to their Macs, including microphones and cameras.

The rules created by each user are saved within a database on the Mac protected by [System Integrity Protection \(SIP\)](#), which ensures that only the TCC daemon can modify it.

If the user disables SIP on the system, CloudMensis will grant itself permissions by adding new rules to the TCC.db file.

However, "if SIP is enabled but the Mac is running any version of macOS Catalina earlier than 10.15.6, CloudMensis will exploit a vulnerability to make the TCC daemon (tccd) load a database CloudMensis can write to."

The vulnerability it uses, in this case, is a CoreFoundation bug tracked as CVE-2020-9934 and patched by Apple [two years ago](#).

While ESET has only seen this malware abusing this flaw in the wild, the attackers have no shortage of ways to bypass TCC, seeing that Apple has also recently addressed bugs leading to a similar impact.

For instance, they could exploit the Microsoft-discovered [powerdir](#) flaw ([CVE-2021-30970](#)), Time Machine mounts ([CVE-2020-9771](#)), environment variable poisoning ([CVE-2020-9934](#)), or a bundle conclusion issue ([CVE-2021-30713](#)).

By circumventing TCC, the malware gains access to infected Macs' screens, can scan connected removable storage for documents of interest, and log keyboard events.

"Usage of vulnerabilities to work around macOS mitigations shows that the malware operators are actively trying to maximize the success of their spying operations," ESET concluded.

"At the same time, no undisclosed vulnerabilities (zero-days) were found to be used by this group during our research. Thus, running an up-to-date Mac is recommended to avoid, at least, the mitigation bypasses."

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HEADLINE	07/18 Fake tools target industrial control systems
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/attackers-targeting-industrial-systems-with-trojanized-password-crackers">https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/attackers-targeting-industrial-systems-with-trojanized-password-crackers</a>
GIST	Threat actors are targeting systems in industrial control environments with backdoor malware hidden in fake password-cracking tools. The tools, being touted for sale on a variety of social media websites, offer to recover passwords for hardware systems used in industrial environments.



Researchers from Dragos recently analyzed one such password-cracking product and found it to contain "Sality," an old malware tool that makes infected systems part of a peer-to-peer botnet for cryptomining and password cracking.

The password-cracking tool was being hawked as software that could help users of Automation Direct's DirectLogic 06 programmable logic controllers (PLCs) recover lost or forgotten passwords. When installed on the PLC, the software did not really "crack" the password. Rather, it [exploited a vulnerability in the PLC](#) to recover the password from the system on command and send it in clear text to the user's connected engineering workstation. The sample that Dragos analyzed required the user to have a direct serial connection from their workstation to the Automation Direct PLC. However, the security vendor said it was able to develop a more dangerous version of the exploit that works over Ethernet as well.

Dragos said it reported the vulnerability (CVE-2022-2003) to Automation Direct, which [issued a fix for it in June](#).

In addition to retrieving the password, Dragos observed the so-called password-cracking tool dropping Sality on the host system and making it a part of the botnet. The specific sample of Sality also dropped malware for hijacking the infected system's clipboard every half second and checking it for cryptocurrency address formats. If the malware detected one, it replaced the address with a threat actor-controlled address.

"This in-real-time hijacking is an effective way to steal cryptocurrency from users wanting to transfer funds and increases our confidence that the adversary is financially motivated," Dragos said in a recent blog.

### **Intriguing Strategy**

Dragos did not immediately respond to a Dark Reading request for clarification on who exactly the buyers for such password-cracking software would be and why they might want to buy these tools from unverified sellers on social media websites. It was also not clear why threat actors would go to the trouble of developing Trojanized password crackers for PLCs in critical infrastructure and operational technology environments if the goal is purely financial. Often attacks targeting equipment in industrial and OT environments have other motivations such as surveillance, data theft, and sabotage.

Dragos' research showed that the password cracker for Automation Direct's PLCs is just one of many similarly fake password retrievers that are available on social media websites. Dragos researchers found similar executables for retrieving passwords from more than 30 PLCs, human-machine interface (HMI) systems, and project files in industrial settings. Among them were six PLCs from Omron, two PLCs from Siemens, four HMIs from Mitsubishi, and products from an assortment of other vendors including LG, Panasonic, and Weintek.

Dragos said it only tested the password cracker for Automation Direct's DirectLogic PLC. However, an initial analysis of the other tools showed they contained malware as well. "In general, it appears there is an ecosystem for this type of software. Several websites and multiple social media accounts exist all touting their password 'crackers'," Dragos said in its blog.

Attacks targeting ICS environments have grown in number and sophistication in recent years. Since the 2010 Stuxnet attack on Iran's uranium enrichment facility in Natanz, there have been numerous instances where threat actors have gained access to critical systems in ICS and OT environments and deployed malware on them. Some of the more recent, notable examples include malware such as [Industroyer/Crashoverride, Triton/Trisis, and BlackEnergy](#). In April 2022, the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) warned critical infrastructure organizations to be on the lookout for three sophisticated malware tools — collectively referred to as [Incontroller/PipeDream](#) — custom-built to attack PLCs from Schneider Electric, Omron, and systems based on the Open Platform Communications Unified Architecture (OPC UA) standard.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.zdnet.com/article/the-next-big-security-threat-is-staring-us-in-the-face-tackling-it-is-going-to-be-tough/?web_view=true">https://www.zdnet.com/article/the-next-big-security-threat-is-staring-us-in-the-face-tackling-it-is-going-to-be-tough/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>If the ongoing fight against ransomware wasn't keeping security teams busy, along with the challenges of securing the ever-expanding galaxy of Internet of Things devices, or cloud computing, then there's a new challenge on the horizon – protecting against the coming wave of digital imposters or deepfakes.</p> <p>A deepfake video uses artificial intelligence and deep-learning techniques to produce fake images of people or events.</p> <p>One recent example is when the mayor of Berlin <i>thought</i> he was having an online meeting with former boxing champion and current mayor of Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko.</p> <p>But the mayor of Berlin grew suspicious when 'Klitschko' started saying some very out of character things relating to the invasion of Ukraine, and when the call was interrupted the mayor's office contacted the Ukrainian ambassador to Berlin – to discover that, whoever they were talking to, it wasn't the real Klitschko.</p> <p>The imposter also apparently spoke to other European mayors, but in each case it looks like they had been holding a conversation with a <a href="#">deepfake</a>, an AI-generated false video that looks like a real human speaking.</p> <p>It's a sign that deepfakes are getting more advanced and quickly. Previous instances of deepfake videos that have gone viral often have tell-tale signs that something isn't real, such as unconvincing edits or odd movements.</p> <p>This whole episode appears to have been concocted by someone purely to cause trouble – but the developments in deepfake technology mean it isn't difficult to imagine it being exploited by cyber criminals, particularly when it comes to stealing money.</p> <p>As such, this incident is also a warning: that deepfakes are enabling a new set of threats – not just for mayors, but for all of us.</p> <p>While <a href="#">ransomware</a> might generate more headlines, business email compromise (BEC) is the costliest form of cyber crime today. <a href="#">The FBI estimates that it costs businesses billions of dollars every year.</a></p> <p><a href="#">The most common form of BEC attack</a> involves cyber criminals exploiting emails, <a href="#">hacking into accounts belonging to bosses</a> – or cleverly spoofing their email accounts – and asking staff to authorise large financial transactions, which can often amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.</p> <p>The emails claim that the money needs to be sent urgently, maybe as part of a secret business deal that can't be disclosed to anyone. It's a classic social-engineering trick designed to force the victim into transferring money quickly and without asking for confirmation from anyone else who could reveal it's a fake request.</p> <p>By the time anyone might be suspicious, the cyber criminals have taken the money, likely closed the bank account they used for the transfer – and run.</p> <p>BEC attacks are successful, but many people might remain suspicious of an email from their boss that comes out the blue and they could avoid falling victim by speaking to someone to confirm that it's not real.</p> <p>But if cyber criminals could use a deepfake to make the request, it could be much more difficult for victims to deny the request, because they believe they're actually speaking to their boss on camera.</p>

Many companies publicly list their board of directors and senior management on their website. Often, these high-level business executives will have spoken at events or in the media, so it's possible to find footage of them speaking.

By using AI-powered deep-learning techniques, cyber criminals could exploit this public information to create a deepfake of a senior-level executive, exploit email vulnerabilities to request a video call with an employee, and then ask them to make the transaction. If the victim believes they're speaking to their CEO or boss, they're unlikely to deny the request.

[Scammers have already used artificial intelligence to convince employees they're speaking to their boss on the phone.](#) Adding the video element will make it even harder to detect that they're actually talking to fraudsters.

The FBI has already warned that [cyber criminals are using deepfakes to apply for remote IT support jobs](#), roles which would allow access to sensitive personal information of staff and customers that could be stolen and exploited.

The agency has also warned that hackers will use [deepfakes and other AI-generated content for foreign influence operations](#) – arguably it's something along these lines that targeted the mayors.

While advances in technology means it's becoming more difficult to tell deepfake content apart from real-life video, the FBI has issued advice on how to spot a deepfake, which includes the video warping, strange head and torso movements, along with syncing issues between face and lip movement, and any associated audio.

But deepfakes could easily become a new vector for cyber crime, and it's going to be a real struggle to contain the trend. It's entirely possible that organisations will need to come up with a new set of rules around authenticating decisions made in online meetings. It's also a challenge to the authenticity of remote working – what does it mean if you can't believe what you see on the screen?

The more that companies and their people are aware of the potential risks posed by malicious deepfakes now, the easier it will be to protect against attacks – otherwise, we're in trouble.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 CISA first-ever international branch office</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/cisa-to-open-first-ever-international-branch-office/">https://therecord.media/cisa-to-open-first-ever-international-branch-office/</a>
GIST	<p>The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) announced Monday that it would open its first-ever international outpost in London later this month.</p> <p>“As America’s cyber defense agency, we know that digital threat actors don’t operate neatly within borders. To help build resilience against threats domestically, we must think globally,” CISA Director Jen Easterly said in a statement.</p> <p>“I’m thrilled for CISA’s first international Attaché Office to open in London — true operational collaboration is a global endeavor.”</p> <p>CISA and other federal agencies have routinely teamed up with the United Kingdom’s top cyber authority, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), to issue joint warnings about vulnerabilities or malicious digital activity — work that has only increased since Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>The new London branch will be helmed by Julie Johnson, who previously served as a regional protective security advisor for CISA in New York. She also worked as the agency’s regional lead for federal interagency working groups.</p>

	<p>Prior to joining the DHS cyber wing, Johnson served in a variety of roles at the State Department, including within the bureaus of Intelligence and Research, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and Educational and Cultural Affairs, where her duties included IT center deployments and international training, according to CISA.</p> <p>Today's announcement <a href="#">comes days after the White House said</a> CISA and the FBI had signed cybersecurity collaboration agreements with Saudi Arabia's National Cybersecurity Authority.</p> <p>The two accords are meant to promote information sharing between the two countries, including efforts to boost cyber defense and best practices.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Heatwave can permanently damage iPhone</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.zdnet.com/article/heatwave-temperatures-can-permanently-damage-your-iphone/">https://www.zdnet.com/article/heatwave-temperatures-can-permanently-damage-your-iphone/</a>
GIST	<p>As climate change makes heatwaves a more common occurrence, with even the normally mild UK currently seeing temperatures soar to 40 degrees Celsius (about 104 degrees Fahrenheit), our tech gadgets aren't used to working in these temperatures.</p> <p>Yes, it can get too hot even for your gadgets.</p> <p>Take your iPhone, for example.</p> <p>Apple <a href="#">makes it very clear</a> that this should only be used "where the ambient temperature is between 0° and 35°C (32° to 95°F)," and that using it outside of this range "may cause your device to change its behavior to regulate its temperature."</p> <p>These behavior changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging, including wireless charging, slows down or stops completely</li> <li>• The display dims or goes black</li> <li>• Cellular radios enter a low-power state and signal strength may decrease</li> <li>• The camera flash is temporarily disabled</li> <li>• Performance is degraded with graphics-intensive apps or features</li> </ul> <p>It gets worse.</p> <p>"Using an iOS or iPadOS device in very hot conditions can permanently shorten battery life."</p> <p>You read that right. Using your iPhone or iPad in heatwave temperatures can cause permanent damage. When things get too hot, your iPhone might pop up a warning screen.</p> <p>In this state you might still be able to make emergency calls, but it's best to switch off your iPhone and put it somewhere cooler to prevent damage.</p> <p>Apple's offers some tips on helping to keep your iPhone cool in high temperatures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't leave your iPhone or iPad in a car on a hot day</li> <li>• Don't leave your iPhone or iPad in direct sunlight for an extended period of time</li> <li>• Try to not use demanding features such as GPS tracking or navigation in a car, playing a graphics-intensive game, or using augmented-reality apps in hot conditions or direct sunlight</li> </ul> <p>Another tip that I find useful is to take the iPhone out of any case.</p> <p>Just try not to drop it!</p> <p>And remember, while other smartphone and table manufacturers might not publish technical bulletins related to temperature like Apple does, it makes sense to keep all smartphones and tablets and other gadgets out of the burning sun.</p>

	<p>Everything that contains a rechargeable battery can suffer damage -- even permanent damage -- from being exposed to high temperatures. iPhone, iPad, Android smartphones, even flashlights and other gadgets containing a rechargeable battery.</p> <p>So, while you need to remember to take care of yourself in the heat -- keep hydrated! -- it's also a good idea to keep an eye on your gadgets too!</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Roaming Mantis hits Android, iOS users</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/roaming-mantis-hits-android-and-ios-users-in-malware-phishing-attacks/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/roaming-mantis-hits-android-and-ios-users-in-malware-phishing-attacks/</a>
GIST	<p>After hitting Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, the US, and the U.K. the Roaming Mantis operation moved to targeting Android and iOS users in France, likely compromising tens of thousands of devices.</p> <p>Roaming Mantis is believed to be a financially-motivated threat actor that started <a href="#">targeting</a> European users in February.</p> <p>In a recently observed campaign, the threat actor uses SMS communication to lure users into downloading malware on their Android devices. If the potential victim uses iOS, they are redirected to a phishing page for Apple credentials.</p> <p><b>Dropping XLoader</b></p> <p>In a report published today, researchers at cybersecurity company <a href="#">SEKOIA</a> say that the Roaming Mantis group is now dropping on Android devices the XLoader (MoqHao) payload, a powerful malware that counts features such as remote access, information stealing, and SMS spamming.</p> <p>The ongoing Roaming Mantis campaign is targeting French users and starts with an SMS sent to prospective victims, urging them to follow a URL.</p> <p>The text message informs about a package that has been sent to them and which they need to review and arrange its delivery.</p> <p>If the user is located in France and are using an iOS device, they are directed to a phishing page that steals Apple credentials. Android users are pointed to a site that delivers the installation file for a mobile app, (an Android Package Kit - APK).</p> <p>For users outside France Roaming Mantis' servers show a 404 error and the attack stops.</p> <p>The APK executes and mimics a Chrome installation, requesting risky permissions such as SMS interception, making phone calls, reading and writing storage, handling system alerts, getting accounts list, and more.</p> <p>The command and control (C2) configuration is retrieved from hardcoded Imgur profile destinations which are encoded in base64 to evade detection.</p> <p>SEKOIA confirmed that over 90,000 unique IP addresses have requested XLoader from the main C2 server so far, so the victim pool might be significant.</p> <p>The number of iOS users who have handed over their Apple iCloud credentials on the Roaming Mantis phishing page is unknown and could be the same or even higher.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure details</b></p> <p>SEKOIA's analysts report that the infrastructure of Roaming Mantis hasn't changed much since its last analysis from team Cymru last April.</p>

	<p>The servers still have open ports at TCP/443, TCP/5985, TCP/10081, and TCP/47001, while the same certificates seen in April are still in use.</p> <p>“Domains used inside SMS messages are either registered with Godaddy or use dynamic DNS services such as duckdns.org,” explains SEKOIA in the <a href="#">report</a>.</p> <p>The intrusion set uses over a hundred subdomains, and dozens of FQDN resolve each IP address.</p> <p>Interestingly, the smishing (SMS phishing) operation relies on separate C2 servers from those used by XLoader, and the analysts could identify nine of those hosted on EHOSTIDC and VELIANET Autonomous Systems.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 FBI warns of fake cryptocurrency apps</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/fbi-warns-of-fake-cryptocurrency-apps-used-to-defraud-investors/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/fbi-warns-of-fake-cryptocurrency-apps-used-to-defraud-investors/</a>
GIST	<p>The FBI has warned today that cybercriminals use fraudulent cryptocurrency investment applications to steal funds from US investors.</p> <p>So far, the US federal law enforcement agency estimates that cyber criminals have already successfully stolen roughly \$42,7 million from 244 victims.</p> <p>"The FBI has observed cyber criminals contacting US investors, fraudulently claiming to offer legitimate cryptocurrency investment services, and convincing investors to download fraudulent mobile apps, which the cyber criminals have used with increasing success over time to defraud the investors of their cryptocurrency," the FBI said in an alert published Monday.</p> <p>The agency identified crooks operating under several company names, such as Yibit (between October 2021 and May 2022) and Supayos aka Supay (in November 2021).</p> <p>They convinced multiple targets to install bogus apps and deposit funds into wallets the attackers claimed were associated with the victims' app accounts.</p> <p>Between 22 December 2021 and 7 May 2022, other cybercriminals impersonated a legitimate US financial institution to defraud dozens of other victims out of millions of dollars worth of cryptocurrency.</p> <p>They used a similar tactic, tricking victims into installing a bogus app and depositing cryptocurrency into wallets allegedly linked with the victims' accounts on the app.</p> <p><b>One of several cryptocurrency scam warnings</b></p> <p>The FBI has previously <a href="#">warned cryptocurrency owners of fraudsters targeting virtual assets</a> by impersonating crypto exchange or payment platform's support staff.</p> <p>The FBI Criminal Investigative Division and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) also <a href="#">warned stock market investors in July 2021 of fraudsters</a> impersonating registered investment professionals such as brokers and advisors.</p> <p>In today's alert, the FBI advised <a href="#">[PDF]</a> investors always to be wary of prompts to install investment apps from unknown individuals, to verify that the company behind such apps is legitimate, and to treat apps with broken or limited functionality with skepticism.</p> <p>Cryptocurrency owners are also recommended to enable multi-factor authentication (MFA) on all their accounts, deny requests to use remote access apps, and always reach out to exchanges and payment companies using official phone numbers and email addresses.</p>
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HEADLINE	07/18 Ransomware attempts, payments decline
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/ransomware-attempts-flag-as-payments-also-decline">https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/ransomware-attempts-flag-as-payments-also-decline</a>
GIST	<p>Attempted ransomware attacks declined in the first quarter of 2022, as companies continued to be less likely to pay requested ransoms and the war between Russia and Ukraine disrupted the Eastern European groups responsible for a significant share of attacks, endpoint detection-and-response firm <a href="#">Trellix states in a new report</a>.</p> <p>Companies continued to encounter the two most common ransomware families — LockBit and Conti — more than a third of the time, but both ransomware attacks are seen far less often, with detections for LockBit dropping by 44% and Conti by 37%, according to Trellix's "Summer 2022 Threat Report." Globally, ransomware targeted the telecom sector in more than half of attacks, but business services dominated the targeting of US organizations, accounting for 64% of detections.</p> <p>While cybercriminals often avoid politics, the decline likely comes as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has led to more geopolitical-related attacks but fewer ransomware campaigns, says Christiaan Beek, lead scientist at Trellix.</p> <p>"The attacks are shifting," he says. "While we saw some wipers and some other malware, which continued in April and May, they remain fairly low activity, but we are seeing more activity from hacktivism and [patriot] groups."</p> <p>The report from Trellix's Threat Labs is the first analysis from the company to combine data and telemetry from two acquisitions — McAfee Enterprise and FireEye's product business — bought by Symphony Technology Group in 2021. In January, STG <a href="#">renamed the combined businesses Trellix</a>.</p> <p>The company also includes references to data from a third party — incident response firm Coveware — that shows only 46% of companies paid a ransom in the first quarter of 2022, down from 85% for the same quarter three years ago. The average victim's payment to ransomware groups also declined to \$74,000, down more than a third from the fourth quarter of 2021, <a href="#">Coveware stated in a May blog post</a>.</p> <p>"This is what progress looks like against ransomware. It is slow," the company stated.</p> <p><b>Harder to Compromise Systems</b></p> <p>Nation-state activity continues to be a major threat, according to Trellix's report. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine — two countries that are thought to be home to several ransomware groups — attacks have focused on a goal of data exfiltration while using cybercrime as a way to fund the effort.</p> <p>In February, for example, the Conti group <a href="#">publicly posted a statement supporting the Russian government</a>. The following month, a Ukrainian researcher leaked years of Conti's internal chats, showing that the group had dozens of coders, operated like a business, and maintained separate sets of tools to hide the actual size of their operations.</p> <p>"[W]e should consider we might be witnessing the formation of a hybrid group, one that can attack targets chosen by the government, but maintaining the plausible deniability of a crime group after financial gain," Trellix's report states. "The ransomware might have a dual purpose, on the one hand being disruptive in nature and on the other hand serving as a distraction for a data exfiltration operation."</p> <p>Other major trends include the continued adoption of living-off-the-land (LotL) techniques. While a red-team tool, Cobalt Strike, continues to be the most popular attack tool by far — used in a third (32%) of campaigns — attackers continue to use tools resident on the targeted systems, including Windows Shell, PowerShell, and the Windows Management Interface (WMI), Trellix's report states.</p> <p>However, attackers do have to work harder to compromise systems, with improving defenses requiring longer attack chains, says Beek. In the past, a victim might click on a link in an email or open an untrusted attachment and have a malicious program installed.</p>

"Now, you see an email with an attachment still, but it has a little script in there that is a URL, for example, and it goes to one website, downloads a little bit of code," Beek says. "There are more stages that are happening before something is definitely being put on the system."

While telecommunications companies and business services are currently the most popular targets of attacks, among the most worrisome trends is the vulnerability of the healthcare industry and the continued ransomware attacks on the organizations that provide medical care, Beek says.

He warns that the trend will likely continue, given the anemic funding for cybersecurity in healthcare.

"This is not just the a ransomware perspective — it's also about the level of vulnerability," he says. "For me, that is a concern. You want to go to a hospital to get treated, and you don't want delays because of ransomware."

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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Massive cyberattack shuts Albania govt.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://securityaffairs.co/wordpress/133363/cyber-warfare-2/albania-cyber-attack.html?web_view=true">https://securityaffairs.co/wordpress/133363/cyber-warfare-2/albania-cyber-attack.html?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p><b>A synchronized criminal attack from abroad hit Albania over the weekend, all Albanian government systems shut down following the cyberattack.</b></p> <p>Albania was hit by a massive cyberattack over the weekend, the government confirmed on Monday. A synchronized criminal attack from abroad hit the servers of the National Agency for Information Society (AKSHI), which handles many government services.</p> <p><i>"In order to withstand these unprecedented and dangerous strikes, we have been forced to close down government systems until the enemy attacks are neutralized," the Albanian National Agency for the Information Society (AKSHI) <a href="#">said</a> in a statement.</i></p> <p>Government services were all down on Monday after the cyber attack.</p> <p><i>"Albania is under a massive cybernetic attack that has never happened before. This criminal cyber-attack was synchronized... from outside Albania," <a href="#">the Council of Ministers said in a press release</a>. "In order to not allow this attack to damage our information system, the National Agency of Information Society had temporarily shut down online services and other government websites."</i></p> <p>Most of the desk services for the population were interrupted, and only several important services, such as online tax filing, are still working because they are provided by servers not targeted in the attack.</p> <p>Sali Berisha, a former PM and opposition leader, was critical of the cyber posture of its government.</p> <p><i>"How did it happen that the government ordered almost all important services to go through this website?" Berisha asked. "How can such initiatives be undertaken while no professional policing against cyber crime is yet in place?"</i></p> <p>The Microsoft Jones Group International team is helping AKSHI to mitigate the effect of the attack and restore operations.</p> <p>In December Albania's prime minister Edi Rama <a href="#">apologized</a> for the massive leak of personal records from a government database of state.</p> <p>Exposed records include the personal identity card numbers, employment and salary data of some 637,000 people.</p> <p>In April 2021 a similar incident exposed identity card records from a state database ahead of Albania's parliamentary elections.</p>

HEADLINE	07/18 Online payment fraud losses exceed \$343B
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/07/18/online-payment-fraud-losses-to-exceed-343-billion/?web_view=true">https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/07/18/online-payment-fraud-losses-to-exceed-343-billion/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Cumulative merchant losses to online payment fraud globally between 2023 and 2027 will exceed \$343 billion, according to Juniper Research. As a comparison, this equates to over 350% of Apple's reported net income in the 2021 fiscal year, showing the massive extent of these losses.</p> <p>Online payment fraud includes losses across the sales of digital goods, physical goods, money transfer transactions and banking, as well as purchases like airline ticketing. Fraudster attacks can include phishing, business email compromise and socially engineered fraud.</p> <p>Online payment <a href="#">fraud losses</a> are partly being driven by fraudster innovation in areas such as account takeover fraud, where a user's account is hijacked. This is despite the wide employment of identity verification measures.</p> <p><b>Innovation needed in fraud prevention strategies</b></p> <p>The research found that in order to combat rising fraud, fraud prevention vendors must orchestrate the right mix of verification tools, at the most effective point in the customer journey, to best protect users, but that this will require significant capabilities to achieve.</p> <p>Report author <a href="#">Nick Maynard</a> explained: "Fundamentally, no two online transactions are the same, so the way transactions are secured cannot follow a one-size-fits-all solution. Payment fraud detection and prevention vendors must build a multitude of verification capabilities, and intelligently orchestrate different solutions depending on circumstances, in order to correctly protect both merchants and users."</p> <p><b>Physical goods largest fraud area</b></p> <p>The research identified physical goods purchases as the largest single source of losses; accounting for 49% of cumulative online payment fraud losses globally over the next 5 years, growing by 110%.</p>
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## Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	07/18 Africa coups give China, Russia an edge
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.airforcemag.com/african-coups-give-china-and-russia-an-edge-in-restive-sahel/">https://www.airforcemag.com/african-coups-give-china-and-russia-an-edge-in-restive-sahel/</a>
GIST	<p>Service members working to fight terrorist groups expanding in Africa have their hands tied by restrictions on security cooperation with military-led countries, giving China and Russia an edge, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Africa Chidi Blyden told senators July 12.</p> <p>The <a href="#">restive Sahel region of Africa</a> consists of five vast, sub-Saharan nations plagued by terrorist groups that have helped unseat democracies and welcomed America's strategic competitors. Three of the five nations—Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad—have undergone coups in the past two years. The coups trigger a State Department restriction on security cooperation and leave the Defense Department with just one main partner in the region, Niger, which is home to the heavily fortified Air Base 101 and Air Base 201, which are used for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance of terrorist groups.</p> <p>"Russia and the [People's Republic of China] routinely provide training and defense articles to African nations," Blyden told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on insecurity in the Sahel.</p> <p>"While our African partners have stated repeatedly that they prefer our training and defense articles, they turn to our competitors when we are not responsive to their requests," she added. "Ending our U.S. security cooperation has affected our bilateral engagement."</p>

Blyden called for finding a way to continue engaging with the Sahel nations so that access and influence are not lost to America's competitors, but senators sought to further restrict opportunities for cooperation.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee chair Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) urged the State Department to impose travel sanctions on foreign government officials who were involved in the coups. Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), meanwhile, introduced legislation to further expand the vetting of foreign military officers before they are allowed to participate in U.S. training programs.

Robert Jenkins, assistant administrator of the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization at the U.S. Agency for International Development, painted a picture of what a loss of American influence looks like in the Sahel.

"It's a region where we've seen young people dancing in support of military takeovers, waving Russian flags, and repeating the disinformation that targets them relentlessly," he said, describing scenes from Mali's May 17, 2022, coup.

The suspension of U.S. assistance to Mali, coupled with the withdrawal of French counter-terrorist forces, led Mali's ruling junta to invite the Russian mercenary Wagner Group, implicated in many civilian deaths in Ukraine, to help provide security.

Blyden said DOD is working closely with France on the withdrawal of its 2,400 troops to Niger, where the U.S. maintains some 800 troops conducting ISR on terrorist groups; building partner capacity; and working to counter China and Russia's influence.

The shrinking U.S. and French foothold in the Sahel means the United States may start to reposition forces in other African countries, especially littoral states that are now threatened by the expansion of terrorist groups.

"Our operations and the support that we provide will continue in a way, but it will be spread more widely," said Blyden.

"We see the spread moving towards the coastal West Africa countries," she said, referring to the more prosperous nations on Africa's west coast. "We're seeing an opportunity with the French repositioning to really rethink where it is that we might need bolstering of African partners to be able to continue to counter the violent extremist threat."

Mauritania is one nation that straddles both the Sahel and littoral regions that may benefit from a deeper partnership, the defense official said.

Blyden said that despite the restriction on security cooperation, the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act authorizes money to counter Russia and China on the continent, and DOD is looking at programs to counter China and the Wagner Group's influence.

"We have to recognize that there is a great powers competition going on," said Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), calling on DOD to find ways to do more. "Russia and China are both very actively engaged on the African continent, and they are also very actively engaged within the Sahel."

U.S. Air Forces Africa and U.S. Africa Command did not respond to requests by Air Force Magazine for comment. The Pentagon declined to provide further details on the security threat and challenges faced.

The Senate Armed Services Committee will host a confirmation hearing July 21 [for Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Michael Langley for promotion](#) to general and to be commander of U.S. Africa Command, the senior military official responsible for engaging with nations in the region.

HEADLINE	07/18 ISIS seeking to reestablish itself in Africa?
SOURCE	<a href="https://securityboulevard.com/2022/07/what-recent-isis-attacks-in-africa-tells-us-about-the-terrorist-groups-resurgence/">https://securityboulevard.com/2022/07/what-recent-isis-attacks-in-africa-tells-us-about-the-terrorist-groups-resurgence/</a>
GIST	<p><b>KEY TAKEAWAY</b>  ISIS possibly looking to Africa to revive its former caliphate</p> <p>Increasing attacks in Africa, coupled with fresh propaganda, suggest that the global terrorist network may be seeking to re-establish itself as more than an insurgent group on the run.</p> <p><b>Jihad, <i>Hijra</i>, and Africa</b>  Even as ISIS's former stronghold in Iraq and Syria has severely weakened in recent years, the group appears intent on rebuilding—possibly looking to Africa to revive its former caliphate. To this end, ISIS's media apparatus has been increasingly focused on its operations in Africa, launching what appears to be a new campaign to encourage fighters to pursue jihad in and <i>hijra</i> (migration) to Africa.</p> <p>The increased attention ISIS has afforded for its franchises in Africa raises many concerns. Chief among them is encouraging other fighters to go to Africa to perform jihad, whether that be by way of fighting members of the military, burning <a href="#">Christian villages</a>, or promoting ISIS's fundamentalist doctrine.</p> <p>If ISIS's promotion of Africa as a destination for jihad proves to be sustained and successful, the group may continue to build its ranks, alliances, and reach in the region, which could in turn result in more violence and pose a threat to any form of foreign presence. And if this push is not contained soon, the group is likely to continue to gain more physical territory and control, enabling it to reach closer to major targets, such as government, commercial, and/or nonprofit assets operating in Africa.</p> <p><b>Rise of attacks in the region</b>  There has been a steady increase of ISIS-claimed attacks in multiple parts of Africa, which precede fresh propaganda campaigns. The attacks have primarily taken place in several parts of <a href="#">Mozambique</a> and the Sahel region of central and <a href="#">western Africa</a>.</p> <p>According to our intelligence, ISIS has claimed responsibility for a total of 182 attacks in Nigeria between January 1 and July 6, 2022, with 87 percent of these attacks occurring in Borno state. In the same period last year, there were 44 ISIS-claimed attacks with 86 percent of them occurring in Borno.</p> <p><b>Attacks in Mozambique and Nigeria</b>  ISIS fighters in Africa have focused their attacks on Christian villages and members of the militaries in Nigeria and Mozambique. These attacks are often publicized in Al-Nabaa, a weekly magazine published by ISIS official outlets on Telegram and Rocketchat, as well as their forums. The magazine was first released in 2021, and focuses on the group's militant activities and religious messaging from the group's doctrine.</p> <p>In al-Nabaa's <a href="#">June 23</a> release, the group claimed to have killed and injured a total of twenty-two members of the Nigerian Armed Forces; in another incident, they claim to have killed at least thirty-three others, ten of who were members of the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces, and twenty-three of who were Christian residents.</p> <p>One of the most notable, recent operations was the break into <a href="#">Kuje prison</a>, a government-run "medium-security prison" facility in Abuja, Nigeria. <a href="#">News outlets</a> reported that over 800 prisoners were released and 400 of them were "at large," with several people killed during the operation, including one prison guard.</p> <p>In a detailed statement, ISIS <a href="#">remarked</a> that this operation was part of a "series" titled "<a href="#">Breaking the Walls</a>"—in reference to an <a href="#">operation</a> that was launched by former ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to free prisoners from Abu Ghraib prison and al-Hout Prison in al-Taji in 2013. The Abuja, Nigeria prison break operation aimed to free what ISIS labeled in its <a href="#">Amaq News Agency</a> release as "captured Muslims," who the group claimed were imprisoned for "nearly a decade."</p>



These attacks demonstrate ISIS's capabilities in Africa, with notable levels of sophistication in terms of target planning and execution—or at least an adept ability to exploit local grievances and vulnerabilities. In many ways, this is an alarming reality, especially as ISIS continues its campaign to push its fighters to pursue Africa for *hijra* and jihad.

### Media campaign

Over the past several months, ISIS's official media outlets have focused in large part on highlighting the military operations in Africa. For instance, on [April 17](#), ISIS's official media unit al-Furqan released the second audio message featuring the group's new spokesperson, Abu Omar al-Muhajir, who delivered greetings from ISIS's newest leader to fighters in western Africa. Almost exactly two months later, on [June 16](#), 2022, ISIS published an article in its weekly magazine al-Nabaa, dubbing Africa a "land of *hijra* and jihad."

On [June 23](#), ISIS fighters in Syria released a video also titled "Africa the land of *Hijra* and Jihad," addressing their "brothers" in Africa, praising them for their continued fight against "the crusaders" and other perceived enemies. Four days later, ISIS fighters in Iraq released a similar [video](#), offering support for the fighters in Africa, calling them "lions" to describe their bravery.

Such publications and releases have outlined two main purposes for ISIS's followers to seek Africa as a destination for *hijra* and jihad: to promote Islam (in accordance with ISIS's teachings), and to escape the alleged injustices that Muslims face from their "oppressive" leaders.

Among the ways in which the group has sought to promote Islamic teachings was by establishing various administrative entities with alleged ties to Islam, such as Diwan al-Hisbah (English: "Accountability Office," or "Islamic Police"), Hay'at al-Amr bil Ma'arouf Wa al-Nahy A'an al-Munkar (English: "Committee of the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice"), and Hay'at al-Zakat (English: "Alms Committee").

Such agencies attempt to show supporters that ISIS can provide financial support for those in need, and project a sense of security and law and order. This is the same approach that ISIS took in its early days following its establishment in [2014 and 2015](#)—a focus on promoting governance and infrastructure as opposed to a singular focus on the militant insurgency.

### The future of ISIS in Africa

ISIS's existence in Africa is not new in the continent. The group was able to create a footprint for itself by grabbing on to Boko Haram (meaning "Western Education is Forbidden" in English) in [2015](#). After securing a Baya'a (pledge of allegiance) from Boko Haram's leader Abu Bakr Shekau, ISIS was able to employ Boko Haram's militant training and territorial knowledge to plan and execute attacks in the region, likely at least in part affording ISIS more momentum to metastasize elsewhere on the continent.

While Boko Haram gained much notoriety during the years following its absorption into ISIS—especially after committing various acts of violence, most notably the kidnapping of over 276 schoolgirls from Chibok, Nigeria—ISIS's media apparatus traditionally focused most of its spotlight on its more infamous chapters in countries like Iraq and Syria, where its state building initiative was proving successful (financially and reputationally).

However, since the 2019 demise of its caliphate, if its media strategy is an indicator of the group's aspirations, a strong argument can be made that ISIS is seeking a version of that former state in Africa. Though it is highly unlikely to realize what it did in Iraq and Syria years ago in Africa today, ISIS's calls for *hijra* to Africa, its portrayal of governing functions in Africa, and its increasing attacks on the continent suggest that the global terrorist network may be seeking to re-establish itself as more than an insurgent group on the run.

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HEADLINE	07/19 Airstrike targets al-Shabab remote Somalia
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/us-says-it-kills-two-al-shabaab-militants-somalia-airstrike-2022-07-19/">https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/us-says-it-kills-two-al-shabaab-militants-somalia-airstrike-2022-07-19/</a>



GIST	<p>NAIROBI, July 19 (Reuters) - The U.S. military said it had killed two fighters from the al Shabaab militant group in an airstrike in a remote part of Somalia's southern Jubaland state on Sunday.</p> <p>The United States has been carrying out air strikes in Somalia to try to defeat al Shabaab, an al Qaeda franchise seeking to implement its interpretation of Islamic law and overthrow the country's Western-backed central government.</p> <p>The strike took place near Libikus in the Lower Juba region, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) said in a statement late on Monday.</p> <p>"The command's initial assessment is that two al Shabaab terrorists were killed in action," AFRICOM said. "No civilians were injured or killed given the remote nature of where this engagement occurred."</p> <p>Rights activists have accused the United States of shrouding its Somalia operations in secrecy, potentially undermining accountability for incidents involving civilian deaths.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Young boy charged in terror attack plot</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/national/article/boy-15-accused-of-researching-isle-of-wight-festival-as-terror-attack-target-53631/">https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/national/article/boy-15-accused-of-researching-isle-of-wight-festival-as-terror-attack-target-53631/</a>
GIST	<p>A 15-year-old boy has appeared in court accused of planning a so-called Islamic State-inspired terror attack after allegedly researching the Isle of Wight Festival as a potential target.</p> <p>The teenager had a knife in his rucksack when he was arrested by counter-terrorism police last Monday following a tip-off from the FBI that he was planning to attack a non-believer who he thought had insulted Islam, Westminster Magistrates' Court heard.</p> <p>The boy, from Cowes on the Isle of Wight, appeared in the dock on Monday to deny a charge of preparation of terrorist acts under Section 5 of the Terrorism Act 2006.</p> <p>Prosecutors say he researched the music festival, held between June 16 and 19 on the island, which was attended by around 90,000 people and featured acts including Lewis Capaldi and Kasabian.</p> <p>The youngster, who cannot legally be identified because of his age, is said to have developed an interest in extreme Islam and supported Isis ideology.</p> <p>As well as carrying out online research into a location to commit an attack, the youth is said to have looked at weapons, including firearms, vehicles and a stab vest.</p> <p>He is also said to have obtained a knife and written notes, including an alleged martyrdom note entitled To My Family.</p> <p>He was arrested by officers from Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE) with help from Hampshire Constabulary on Monday July 11 and charged on Sunday.</p> <p>The boy, wearing a grey sweatshirt, dark trousers and black trainers, stood in the well of the court to confirm his name, date of birth and address, before pleading not guilty.</p> <p>Deputy Chief Magistrate Tan Ikram remanded him into youth detention accommodation ahead of his next appearance at the Old Bailey on August 19.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Australia trial: attack terror plot</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.news.com.au/national/nsw-act/courts-law/hamdi-alsudsi-allegedly-planned-to-attack-navy-base-courthouse-and-mardi-gras-in-sydney/news-story/aec52edc8b5eb3393def9e644fca8d4c">https://www.news.com.au/national/nsw-act/courts-law/hamdi-alsudsi-allegedly-planned-to-attack-navy-base-courthouse-and-mardi-gras-in-sydney/news-story/aec52edc8b5eb3393def9e644fca8d4c</a>

## GIST

A Sydney man is accused of leading a “terrorist group” called the Shura, which allegedly made plans to attack the city’s navy base, a courthouse, the Mardi Gras parade and Israeli embassy, a court has been told.

Hamdi Alqudsi, 48, faced the NSW Supreme Court for the beginning of his trial on Monday after he was charged with intentionally directing a terrorist organisation which was preparing to carry out a terrorist act.

Crown prosecutors allege Mr Alqudsi directed the organisation between August 2014 and December 2014.

He has pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Mr Alqudsi first came to the attention of police in mid-2013 when he allegedly rallied men together to form a group called the Shura, meaning consultation council in Arabic.

Crown prosecutor Patricia McDonald SC told the jury he originally recruited people to travel to Syria to “fight against the commonwealth” including extremist jihadist groups and Islamic State (IS), and to collect money for men to travel.

However, “overt action by police” led to the plans being “handicapped” and ultimately stopped the Shura in sending men to Syria.

“The crown case is that the initial activities of the Shura were disrupted by police, through cancellations of passports, exercise of arrests and search warrants,” Ms McDonald said.

The Shura is believed to have changed its focus and allegedly became involved in “fostering domestic terrorism attacks”, the court was told.

Ms McDonald told the jury there was a proposal to “commit a terrorist attack” at Sydney’s navy base on Garden Island at Woolloomooloo.

“There will be a Woolloomooloo letter which sets out some of the proposed details about this attack on the navy base,” she said.

They allegedly proposed to conduct a terrorist attack at a courthouse, while there were also “discussions about terrorist acts on the annual Mardi Gras event or parade”.

The jury was told the group discussed a possible attack on the Israeli embassy and on tourists.

Throughout the trial, Ms McDonald said the jury will be given evidence about the inner workings of the Shura from some of “the brothers” who were allegedly recruited.

They are expected to tell the jury about how the group operated.

She told the jury members of how the Shura allegedly gave a “pledge of allegiance” to IS and became “frustrated” when their plans to travel to Syria through Turkey were undone by police.

“Several members’ of the Shura’s passports were cancelled, preventing them from leaving Australia,” Ms McDonald said.

Ms McDonald told the jury they should expect to hear evidence about how Mr Alqudsi referred to himself as “the commander” of the Shura and complained how members did not respect him.

The group allegedly used code in the form of soccer matches when discussing their plans to go to Syria.

The prosecutor said members would often ask if there is a “soccer match” which referred to whether they could go to Syria and allegedly told Mr Alqudsi they were keen to “go and play soccer”.

	<p>“The accused said to one of the boys, ‘You’re an A-League player, you’ll be an asset for the team,’” Ms McDonald told the jury.</p> <p>Members of the group were allegedly told by Mr Alqudsi they should purchase return tickets to Syria in a bid not to get caught, and should fly through Singapore to Turkey.</p> <p>The jury was told Mr Alqudsi himself had plans to leave Australia and go to Singapore, but he was intercepted at the airport by Australian Border Force (ABF) officers, who told him his passport was cancelled.</p> <p>When he returned home, he allegedly sent a text which said “God’s enemies denied me and seized my passport”.</p> <p>The trial continues in front of Justice Stephen Rothman.</p>
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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	07/18 Unprecedented blazes envelop Alaska
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/18/alaska-wildfires-east-fork-lime-complex">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jul/18/alaska-wildfires-east-fork-lime-complex</a>
GIST	<p>Alaska has seen more than 500 forest fires since the beginning of April, which have forced the evacuation of mining camps, villages, and remote cabins.</p> <p>By 15 June, <a href="#">more than 1m acres</a> (405,000 hectares) in the state had already gone up in flames, about the amount of acres that would normally burn in an entire fire season. By mid July, more than 3m acres of land had been torched, putting the state at risk of breaking its <a href="#">2004 record</a> of 6.5m acres (2.6m hectares) burned.</p> <p>Today <a href="#">264 individual fires</a> are burning across the state. The East Fork complex, which ignited in western Alaska on 31 May, and the Lime complex fire above Bristol Bay, have already destroyed more than 1m acres. Satellite photos show rust-red scars trailing wisps of smoke in the west and south-west parts of the state, where fires continue to smolder. May and June set records in Alaska for dryness.</p> <p>“It’s unprecedented,” said Rick Thoman, a climate specialist at the International Arctic Research Center in Fairbanks, of this year’s fires.</p> <p>Experts like Thoman attribute the burn to two factors: an unusual amount of lightning strikes causing ignitions, and a landscape primed to burn.</p> <p>“Drought, early melt of snowfall, winds and lightning strikes have all combined to make for a tough start to the season,” Thoman said.</p> <p>The high number of lightning strikes is a result of increased vapor in the relatively warmer air across the state, which in turn has increased the number of thunderstorms, Thoman explained.</p> <p>Over a four-day span in July, for example, almost 40,000 lightning hits were recorded across the state, while Alaska averages about 60,000 strikes over the course of a year.</p> <p>The strikes connected with a landscape ready to burn. Willows and alders in the state’s forests have grown thicker and taller, while black spruce, another tree common in the forests, grow larger and work up the hills. Meanwhile, warmer temperatures have increased vegetation on the tundra. “At the end of the day, you just have more material to burn,” Thoman said.</p>

Climate crisis is playing a part in the changing conditions, Thoman said. “It’s not only Alaska. Across the board in the Arctic and the sub-Arctic, you’re seeing this increase in fires. Taking into consideration the lightning, the drought, the early snowmelt – there’s just no doubt the warming planet is playing a huge role in this.”

Sam Harrel, information officer at the Alaska Division of Forestry and Fire Protection, said he couldn’t recall such a drastic year of firefighting in the state. “These lightning storms are relentless. You’ve got the early melting snowpack, and dead grass on the tundra. One strike and the dead grass goes up like tinder.”

### **Long fingers of fire**

The increase in flammable vegetation is creating fires that are “way more intense”, said Kale Casey, the lead information officer for Alaska Incident Management Green Team, which helps coordinate responses to fires across the state. Fires this year are causing a burn Casey said he hasn’t seen in his 17 years of working in fire suppression.

“Rather than running through the trees and just scorching the earth, these guys are burning deep, getting everything,” he said about the fires.

Casey and his firefighters have also noticed what he described as “long fingers of fire” burning deep into the tundra.

Instead of working quickly across the “duff layer”, the dense maps of grass and shrubbery decomposing along the top of the soil, today’s fires often burn through the duff to the mineral soil beneath, explained Zav Grabinski, a science communicator at the Alaska Fire Science Consortium, a wildfire research center in Alaska.

“If the fire burns through the duff and reaches mineral soil that’s the sign of a very hot and deep fire,” Grabinski said. “This year’s duff is bone dry, creating these burns. In a usual year without drought, you can dig down and find moisture pretty quickly.”

Deeper fires can also mean more resilient coals. Embers nest in the duff, insulated over the long winter from snow, feeding on flammable peat. Come spring, winds cause the embers to flare back up, creating holdover fires – or what firefighters call “zombie fires”.

“With fires burning hotter, and burning deeper into the forest floor, we’ve seen that multiple times,” Casey said. “The fire augurs in there, then wakes up again. That’s always discouraging.”

Casey said that zombie fires might be responsible for some of the early fires the state saw in April.

### **Smoke and destruction**

One of the longest-burning fires haunting the state is the Upper Talarik fire, part of what is now known as the Lime fire complex, not far from the proposed site for the controversial Pebble mine, one of the world’s largest open-pit gold and copper mines.

On 30 June, the Upper Talarik fire destroyed a supply camp for Pebble Partnership, the conglomeration vying to build the mines. A charred mess of twisted augurs and skeletons of Quonset huts was all the fire left in its wake.

Due to Alaska’s large size and small population density, fires have only prompted a handful of community evacuations. Homeowners in Anderson, a town located about 80 miles (129 km) south-west of Fairbanks, were told to “take your family and pets and leave now”. At least one home has burned in the area, though officials cannot confirm an exact number.

Among the other impacts has been smoke pollution. Harrel pointed at the East Fork fire, threatening the community of Saint Mary’s on the Yukon River, and Pitkas Point, just across from it. At one point, the smoke was so bad residents couldn’t see the banks on the other side of the river, Harrel said. People did

yard work with respirators. Although the drought allowed residents to run ATVs up lower riverbeds instead of along bumpy trails along the bank, and the smoke kept away mosquitoes (Alaskans refer to the insects as the “state bird”), the fires limited solar panel production and threatened respiratory health.

The smoke causes headaches, burning eyes, and bronchitis. This spring, a hospital in Nome, in western Alaska, [recorded](#) 600 parts per million of particulate matter for PM2.5. Doctors say that anything over 150 parts per million of particulate matter can damage the lungs and trigger asthma.

Seth Kantner, who grew up in a sod cabin on the Kobuk River near Kotzebue along Alaska’s western coast, and built his daughter a cabin 40 miles (64 km) up the Noatak, said he worries constantly about both structures burning in the encroaching Derby Creek fire, especially when he’s working on the ocean commercial fishing. “There’s been very little rain since the snow melted in May. We’ve had sun, but not much precipitation. It’s nerve-racking, worrying about the fires.”

### **The new normal**

While decades of poor forest management have contributed to a number of historical fires in California and the Pacific north-west, Alaska’s situation is different, Casey said. Over the years, most fires in the state had been left to burn due to their remote nature: “In Alaska we basically fight fires by aviation or boat. [The fires] are just so tough to get to,” he noted.

Today, a conglomeration of state and federal firefighters deployed by helicopter, parachute, boat and trucks, work with crews from other US states with the idea that the Alaska crews will reciprocate once the Alaska season wanes and fires intensify farther south. Airplanes nicknamed “Fire Bosses”, drop 800 gallons of water collected from lakes and rivers over the fires, allowing firefighters to create perimeters in an effort to stop the spread.

Still, Casey said, his crews are bracing for the months ahead.

“Here we are, the middle of July. Right now it could go a lot of different ways. 2009. 2004. We have all these memories of these years. In our careers, we hear the word ‘records’ more and more and more. We hope for rain. But as we all know in the trade, hope is not a strategy for fighting fire.”

Rick Halford, a former senate president of the Alaska legislature and air taxi operator who has witnessed fire seasons from his planes, said he has never seen a weather season so intense. “In Alaska, you had lightning and thunder so rarely that your kids were shocked by it,” Halford said. “It’s not that way any more.”

Halford hopes for the heavy rains of late summer, but he has learned after more than half a century living in Alaska that depending on the weather is a risky prospect. As for the larger reason behind the increase in fires, he said that science confirms what he is able to see from the windows of his cockpit. “The fire seasons are getting worse, and that’s a fact,” he added.

“This may end up being our worst year. This is reflective of changes around the planet. Even if these fires aren’t generated by human action, they are still part of what we are changing on this Earth. Things are just getting warmer.”

Francis Mitchell, a former emergency firefighter and public information officer, said that people in his home in McGrath, in south-west Alaska, have been fighting fire since the 1940s. He recalled that in the 1960s, a number of village civilian crews were “trained” to fight remotely. “The plane would show up, and you just got on and fought fire. That was your training.”

The spread of this year’s fires shocked him, he said. “It’s just not what we’re accustomed to seeing.”

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HEADLINE	07/18 Europe is becoming a heatwave hot spot
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/climate/europe-heat-wave-science.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/climate/europe-heat-wave-science.html</a>

Two months ago, France experienced its hottest May on record, with record highs in some cities. Last month, France was blistered again, by a spring heat wave that also affected Spain, Italy and other countries. Then, this month, Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe suffered during a spell of extreme heat.

Now temperatures across Europe are soaring yet again, at or near triple digits from Spain to the British Isles and spreading east. Wildfires stoked by the heat are [burning in many countries](#), and much of the continent is in the [throes of a lengthy drought](#).

And there are still two months of summer left.

Scientists say the persistent extreme heat already this year is in keeping with a trend. Heat waves in Europe, they say, are increasing in frequency and intensity at a faster rate than almost any other part of the planet, including the Western United States.

Global warming plays a role, as it does in heat waves around the world, because temperatures are on average about 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1.1 degrees Celsius) higher than they were in the late 19th century, before emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases became widespread. So extreme heat takes off from a higher starting point.

But beyond that, there are other factors, some involving the circulation of the atmosphere and the ocean, that may make Europe a heat wave hot spot.

No two heat waves are precisely the same. The current scorching temperatures that reached [into England and Wales](#) on Monday were caused in part by a region of upper level low-pressure air that has been stalled off the coast of Portugal for days. It's known as a "cutoff low" in the parlance of atmospheric scientists, because it was cut off from a river of westerly winds, the mid-latitude jet stream, that circles the planet at high altitudes.

Low-pressure zones tend to draw air toward them. In this case, the low-pressure zone has been steadily drawing air from North Africa toward it and into Europe. "It's pumping hot air northward," said Kai Kornhuber, a researcher at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, part of Columbia University.

Dr. Kornhuber contributed to a [study published this month](#) that found that heat waves in Europe had increased in frequency and intensity over the past four decades, and linked the increase at least in part to changes in the jet stream. The researchers found that many European heat waves occurred when the jet stream had temporarily split in two, leaving an area of weak winds and high pressure air between the two branches that is conducive to the buildup of extreme heat.

Efi Rousi, a senior scientist at Potsdam Institute for Climate Research in Germany and the lead author of the study, said the current heat wave appeared to be linked to such a "double jet," which she said has been in place over Europe for the past two weeks. This could have led to the creation of the cutoff low, Dr. Rousi said, as well as to an area of weak winds over Europe that allowed the heat to persist.

"It seems this is really favoring the buildup of this heat wave," she said.

There may be other reasons Europe is seeing more, and more persistent, heat waves, although some of these are currently the subject of debate among scientists. Natural climate variability can make it difficult to tease out specific influences, Dr. Rousi said.

Dr. Kornhuber said warming in the Arctic, which is occurring much faster than other parts of the world, may play a role. As the Arctic warms at a faster rate, the temperature differential between it and the Equator decreases. This leads to a decrease in summertime winds, which has the effect of making weather systems linger for longer. "We do see an increase in persistence," he said.



	<p>There are also indications that changes in one of the world's major ocean currents, <a href="#">the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation</a>, may affect Europe's climate. Dr. Rousi published a paper last year that showed, using computer simulations, that a weakening of the current as the world warmed would cause changes in atmospheric circulation leading to drier summers in Europe.</p> <p>As in other parts of the world, a heat wave in Europe can make it more likely for others to occur in the same area, because a period of extreme heat dries out the soil.</p> <p>When there is some moisture in the soil, some of the sun's energy is used in evaporating the water, leading to a slight cooling effect. But when one heat wave wipes out almost all the soil moisture, there is little left to evaporate when the next wave of hot air arrives. So more of the sun's energy bakes the surface, adding to the heat.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Possible new clue in DB Cooper mystery</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/tiny-particles-db-cooper-mystery/281-17ca7f6e-2f06-4997-a4ab-7fadde3abe13">https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/tiny-particles-db-cooper-mystery/281-17ca7f6e-2f06-4997-a4ab-7fadde3abe13</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Three particles lifted off the necktie of D.B. Cooper are providing an intriguing, new clue in the unsolved 50-year-old skyjacking.</p> <p>An amateur sleuth believes that the microscopic metals are telltale evidence of the skyjacker's employer at the time he jumped from the Boeing 727 airliner over the Pacific Northwest on November 24, 1971.</p> <p>It's a clue that could lead right to the identity of Cooper himself.</p> <p>"I believe that we have identified not only the company where D.B. Cooper came from, but also the specific division within the company that D.B. Cooper came from," said Eric Ullis of Arizona, who has hunted the skyjacker for 14 years.</p> <p>Ullis' evidence comes from a scientific report that was produced 10 years ago by a team that the FBI invited to analyze evidence in the cold case. That team, headed by researcher Tom Kaye, lifted more than 100,000 particles off DB Cooper's necktie. The skyjacker is believed to have discarded the tie on seat 18-E of the aircraft before he leapt from the Northwest Orient Airlines jet with parachutes and \$200,000 ransom.</p> <p>Ullis noticed in lab reports that among the tens of thousands of particles on Cooper's tie were three specks of an alloy made of titanium and antimony, both earth elements. When he researched this alloy, he found that a Pennsylvania metals manufacturer applied for a patent to produce a titanium-antimony alloy in 1957.</p> <p>"I've been looking for something that I would call a tantamount to commercial DNA, the idea being that just as human DNA points to a specific individual commercial DNA close to a specific company, and indeed, I actually found three particles of a very unique and very rare alloy," said Ullis.</p> <p>Records show that a company called Rem-Cru, based in Midland, Pennsylvania manufactured titanium-antimony. In follow-up research and interviews, Ullis said he learned the company never actually sold the product to the aerospace industry. He believes that because it had such limited distribution, the titanium antimony on Cooper's tie is strong evidence that the skyjacker worked at Rem-Cru at some point.</p> <p>"I have managed to isolate one person in particular, one person of interest in particular that I'm looking into, that appears to check several of the boxes. I'm not releasing the person's name publicly, for obvious reasons. But I'm going to continue to look into him," Ullis said.</p>

The assets of Rem-cru, which no longer exists, was sold to larger companies throughout the decades. Ulis has been in touch with Pennsylvania-based Allegheny Technologies and other firms that now own those assets and that may have historical information.

Kaye's team found titanium and other rare particles on Cooper's tie, leading to their theory several years ago that Cooper may have worked for Boeing or one of its contractors. But Ulis is the first to link particles to a specific company.

Rem-Cru was a cutting-edge metals manufacturer in the 1950's and 1960's that was competing for government contracts to produce parts for jet powered aviation and for the space race.

"Going higher, faster, further – that was kind of the mantra of the military and also NASA," said Ted Huetter of the Museum of Flight in Seattle. The Museum of Flight houses a 1950's era Vought F8 Crusader, the Navy's first supersonic fighter jet. The Crusader was built with titanium supplied by Rem-Cru.

Ulis said Rem-Cru was a Boeing contractor and that could have allowed D.B. Cooper to travel to the Pacific Northwest. The FBI has long said that Cooper was familiar with the Pacific Northwest.

"(Rem-Cru employees) would actually work with the engineers at Boeing on the assembly floor. So, these guys were actually on the floor and around the aircraft in the 1960s," said Ulis.

There's a large gap between the time titanium-antimony was produced, mid-1950's, and the skyjacking, November 1971. But Ulis believes his D.B. Cooper suspect hit hard times just before the skyjacking and may have committed the crime out of desperation.

"(Rem-Cru) went through a series of boom and bust cycles, not unlike a lot of other companies in the aerospace sector, specifically in 1971," said Ulis. Just a few months before Cooper's crime, the region was hit with a recession that led to the infamous sign reading: "Will the last person leaving Seattle – turn out the lights?" Boeing laid off thousands and fired contractors after the cancellation of its Supersonic Transport project.

A man calling himself Dan Cooper boarded a Portland to Seattle plane on Thanksgiving Eve of 1971 - in those days, no proof of identity was required. Mid-flight he told a stewardess that he had a bomb in his briefcase and demanded \$200,000 in cash and four parachutes upon arrival at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The FBI met his demands and Cooper ordered the 727 passenger jet to take off again headed for Mexico. He jumped out somewhere over southwest Washington, using the 727's unique "air stairs" rear staircase that could be lowered in flight. Cooper's name was mis-reported as "DB" and the name stuck.

Cooper's identity and his fate have remained a mystery ever since. But Ulis is confident that his lead will unmask the skyjacker.

"This is all about science. This isn't Eric's opinion. This isn't conjecture or anything of that nature. This is about science," he said.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Controversy: Oktoberfest in Leavenworth</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/city-of-leavenworth-to-launch-new-oktoberfest-with-smaller-beer-gardens-more-family-activities/">https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/city-of-leavenworth-to-launch-new-oktoberfest-with-smaller-beer-gardens-more-family-activities/</a>
GIST	<p>LEAVENWORTH, Chelan County — People interested in drinking beer and listening to Bavarian music will get to enjoy those pastimes this fall, as Oktoberfest returns to the city of Leavenworth.</p> <p>Oktoberfest will be back after a two-year hiatus, but it will be run by the Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce and be smaller in scale, Leavenworth Mayor Carl Florea said. The city and chamber are attempting to redesign the city's Oktoberfest, by making it more community and family friendly.</p>

“There will be that traditional piece of the beer gardens, but there will be a smaller footprint and it will be more spread out than just in our parking areas,” Florea said.

Projekt Bayern used to manage the Leavenworth Oktoberfest, but in 2021 the city of Leavenworth rejected an application from the organization to run the festival again. The city wanted the event to be planned differently, Florea said, but Projekt Bayern’s application did not list any changes.

“They said, ‘No, we’re going to do it the same way we’ve always done it,’” Florea said. “And so, we said, ‘Well no, we really are serious about wanting to frame this in a different model.’”

Projekt Bayern decided to relocate the Leavenworth Oktoberfest to the Town Toyota Center in Wenatchee. It will be happening this year over three weekends starting Sept. 30 and ending on Oct. 15. The organization is keeping the “Leavenworth Oktoberfest” name.

Both the Leavenworth and Wenatchee events will run over the same weekends and on the exact same days.

Steve Lord, who is the Oktoberfest chair with Projekt Bayern, declined to comment. Lord said he needed to talk to his lawyers about the city of Leavenworth having its own Oktoberfest event.

The Facebook page for Leavenworth Oktoberfest — the event being held in Wenatchee — contains a post that says the city of Leavenworth and Chamber of Commerce are lying to people that an Oktoberfest is happening in Leavenworth.

“The mayor decided to not sign permits and is trying to steal an event the city has never put anything into,” the post says. “This is how Carl is. Never does anything on his own.”

Florea said he’s been up front that the city and chamber planned on creating a new type of Oktoberfest event with or without Projekt Bayern’s assistance.

“I think it goes back to their thinking like they own the festival and that’s just not true,” Florea said. “They [just] ran a particular form of that festival here for a number of years.”

An Oktoberfest, though, is an internationally used term for a Bavarian-style festival that occurs in October, and the city of Leavenworth is having one, Florea said.

Florea said he does not think the Leavenworth event will compete against the Wenatchee Oktoberfest. The city did not see a downturn in tourism over the past two years, despite the lack of an Oktoberfest in the city.

“We think the valley is big enough for both,” Florea said.

The details of the exact events and activities at the festival have not been finalized and the Chamber of Commerce is still working on them, said Christie Voos, city of Leavenworth spokesperson.

The Leavenworth festival will include more family-friendly activities, such as a root beer garden for kids, according to a news release from the city. It will also have several adult beer gardens placed in the Festhalle and at the Front Street Park, to spread out the crowds.

The event will feature beer from local breweries among its offerings. That includes a special variety that will be a collaboration of three different breweries, Florea said.

The overall goal in redesigning the festival, though, has been to scale it down, Voos said.

“The size of the festival and size of our town weren’t matching,” Voos said.

## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	07/19 Malaysia seizes \$18M illegal animal parts
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/07/19/malaysia-pangolin-elephant-ivory-scales-seizure-trafficking-wildlife/7201658217531/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/07/19/malaysia-pangolin-elephant-ivory-scales-seizure-trafficking-wildlife/7201658217531/</a>
GIST	<p>July 19 (UPI) -- Malaysian authorities seized \$18 million worth of elephant tusks, pangolin scales, rhino horns, tiger fangs and other animal parts in the country's largest haul ever of illegally trafficked wildlife, its customs department announced.</p> <p>Officials discovered the contraband, including over 13,000 pounds of elephant ivory, on a ship coming from an unspecified African country on July 10, customs Director-General Zazuli Johan said Monday, according to state news agency <a href="#">Bernama</a>.</p> <p>The wildlife parts were hidden in a container carrying timber and were intended to be transferred to another ship, Zazuli said.</p> <p>"But we received information on the smuggling and intercepted the container," he said.</p> <p>The seizure was made at the country's busy Port Klang, located on the Malacca Strait.</p> <p>In addition to ivory, other items recovered included 64 pounds of rhino horn, 220 pounds of pangolin scales and more than 660 pounds of skulls and other parts. Malaysia was not the final destination for the trafficked goods, Zazuli said, although he did not specify where they were headed.</p> <p>Malaysia has long been identified as a key transit country in the illegal wildlife trade for shipments bound for other Asian countries, particularly China.</p> <p>A 2017 U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime <a href="#">report</a> concluded that Malaysia "is a major transit point used by international organized crime networks to move wildlife products such as ivory, rhino horn, testudines and pangolins from source countries to destination countries such as China, Vietnam and Thailand."</p> <p>Conservationists praised Malaysian customs agents for the seizure, but cautioned that the attempted trafficking underscores the country's continuing role as a transit hub for the illegal trade.</p> <p>"This medley of threatened species in a single consignment is concerning," Kanitha Krishnasamy, Southeast Asia director for conservation group Traffic, said in a statement. "It certainly verifies the suspicion that criminals continue to use Malaysian ports to move contraband wildlife."</p> <p>The pangolin, an anteater-like mammal covered in scales, has been called the <a href="#">most trafficked animal</a> in the world by some experts, with more than one million estimated to have been illegally traded to countries such as China and Vietnam between 2000 and 2013.</p> <p>The animals are poached for their meat and their scales, which are used in Chinese traditional medicine. International trade of the endangered species has been banned since 2017, and in 2020 China removed pangolin scales from its list of approved ingredients for medicine.</p> <p>Port Klang has been the site of other major busts in recent years, including almost 13,600 pounds of pangolin scales in 2020.</p> <p>"This case also goes to show that criminals are bold enough to think they can get away with repeated attempts," Traffic's Krishnasamy said. "Malaysia must show that it can make arrests and successful convictions of wildlife criminals."</p>

	There have been no arrests yet over the seizure, Malaysian officials said. Investigations into the importer and shipping agent are ongoing.
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Higher gas prices more hacking gas thefts</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/hack-pump-rising-prices-lead-reports-gas-theft-rcna35198">https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/hack-pump-rising-prices-lead-reports-gas-theft-rcna35198</a>
GIST	<p>With gas prices at record highs in the U.S. in recent months, some people have turned to hacking the pump.</p> <p>Since prices <a href="#">spiked</a> in March, police have arrested at least 22 people across the country for either digitally manipulating computers that manage gas pumps or installing homemade devices to discount their fuel, according to an NBC News review of police and local news reports.</p> <p>The most common tactics aren't technologically sophisticated. Gas hackers take advantage of the fact that gas pump equipment in the U.S. is heavily standardized and largely relies on a handful of manufacturers that often don't include strong security protections. And some of the hacking tools are easily available online for purchase.</p> <p>While there's no formal law enforcement metric to measure the trend, 1 in 4 convenience-store gas station owners say fuel thefts have been rising since March, said Jeff Lenard, a vice president of the National Association of Convenience Stores, an industry group.</p> <p>Gas theft has existed for nearly as long as there have been gas stations, Lenard said. But it was only after Hurricane Katrina, where a drastic price increase led to more thefts, that most American stations began requiring customers to prepay for gas. That led to thieves learning how to manipulate pumps and payment systems, he said, and that practice has become more common as gas prices have risen.</p> <p>"There's really nothing like gas prices to get people to think about budgets. It gets people to say 'Where do we save money? Where do we find money?'" he said.</p> <p>Len Denton, a fuel industry veteran and the founder of Guardian Payment Solutions Corp., a startup that makes security products for gas stations, said that gas station owners and law enforcement officials have told him of a rush of theft complaints from station owners and police since March.</p> <p>Most American gas stations use pumps from one of two manufacturers: Wayne Fueling Systems or Gilbarco Veeder-Root. Besides thieves simply arriving in off hours and stealing gas in bulk from underground storage tanks, gas hackers primarily steal using one of two methods, one for each of the two companies, Denton said.</p> <p>Neither company responded to a request for comment.</p> <p>The first exploits the fact that many Wayne fuel dispensers have a remote control option to allow station owners and fuel inspectors to easily access them. Those remotes are not regulated, though, and NBC News found many of them for sale online on places including eBay. Ebay did not immediately respond to a request for comment.</p> <p>While Wayne's gas dispensers require remote users to enter a key code to access its controls, many station owners never change it from the default setting, Denton said.</p> <p>John Clark, a police officer at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department North Division in North Carolina, said a suspect he arrested in March used a remote control to access a Wayne pump at a Charlotte gas station then sold the gas. The suspect, who is still awaiting trial, put the pump into a setting designed for technicians to test gas, which allows them to dispense fuel without payment, Clark said.</p>

"You can just pump as much as you want. The easy solution to prevent this from happening is to change that code when pumps are installed, but for whatever reason, whether apathy or lack of knowledge, some of these owners aren't."

"It's illegal, obviously, but it's a good deal for them," Clark said. "He's making money selling gas at zero expense to himself."

The second method, often used against Gilbarco pumps, tricks a gas pump into dispensing far more gas than it tracks. Gas pumps rely on a device called a pulser to measure how much gas comes out of a pump, telling it how much to charge a customer. Thieves use homemade devices, which can be made from a handful of parts from a hardware store, to slow the pulser so it registers only a fraction of the gas it dispenses.

A thief still needs to open up a gas pump panel to install a pulser manipulator, but many Gilbarco cabinets use a standardized key. NBC News found such keys were also widely available for sale online.

While gas thieves often sell to regular people at a discount, they tend to steal more from independently owned stores. Such stores tend to have only a handful of employees working at a time, unlike major chains that can employ security staff and better surveillance equipment, Denton said.

"The smart thieves are the ones that know how to avoid the guys with all the resources," he said.

"The big corporate gas guys, they're arming up," Denton said. "The little guys, they're much more vulnerable."

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HEADLINE	<b>07/19 Chicago arrests plummet as crime rises</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/arrests-chicago-plummet-historic-lows-crime-rises-police-admittedly-pull-back-no-way">https://www.foxnews.com/us/arrests-chicago-plummet-historic-lows-crime-rises-police-admittedly-pull-back-no-way</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Chicago police</a> have arrested the fewest number of suspects in at least 20 years amid a crime wave that has continued raging in the city since 2020.</p> <p>"In the past, I might see a guy with a gun in his waistband, and I'd jump out and chase him," one decorated officer said, according to the Chicago Sun-Times. "No way I'd do that now."</p> <p>Police made arrests in 12% of crime cases in 2021, which is the lowest rate since 2001, when the data was first released, the Chicago-Sun Times analysis found. The number of arrests in Chicago peaked in 2005 when arrests were made in nearly 31% of reported crimes. That number has been on the decline since, the data shows.</p> <p>The number of traffic stops and tickets have also dropped, and the number of investigative stops fell by more than 50% between 2019 and 2021. Fewer crimes are also being reported to the police department by both residents and officers on beats, according to the analysis.</p> <p>Chicago has been <a href="#">rocked by crime</a> in recent years. Homicides skyrocketed in the city in 2020, following a drop in violence for the three previous years. The Windy City recorded nearly 770 homicides in 2020, up 50% compared to 2019. Last year, the city broke a 25-year record when it surpassed 800 homicides, the Chicago Tribune reported.</p> <p>More of the same has unfolded with shootings since 2020. There were 2,151 shootings in the city in 2019, which increased to over 3,200 in 2020 and 3,561 shooting incidents in 2021.</p> <p>So far this year, shootings and killings for the first half of 2022 are down roughly 17% and 10%, respectively. However, the city is still on pace to break the 600-homicide benchmark by the end of the year, WTTW reported this month.</p>



The decline in arrests comes after sweeping changes were made to how the Chicago P.D. patrols the streets, including restricting their vehicle pursuit policy, ending foot pursuits if a suspect runs from an officer or if someone commits a minor offense. Police were also told to stop making arrests over offenses such as possession of small amounts of marijuana, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

Police who spoke to the outlet, however, say they have pulled back from enforcing the law for other reasons.

One police officer told the outlet that some officers hesitate interacting with "criminals with guns" due to prosecutors having a tighter grip on approving felony charges against criminals.

Attacks, such as the fatal shooting of Chicago police officer Ella French last year, made other officers "step back and think: Who really cares about us at that point?" according to the unnamed police officer.

"We can only support each other at the lowest ranks," the officer said. "And if that means going out there and not doing anything, then that means going out there and not doing anything."

President of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 7, John Catanzara, attributed police pulling back for a host of different reasons, including, the coronavirus, police coming under more scrutiny, and that making an arrest may not be worth their life or becoming a prominent news topic and villain, according to the Sun-Times.

Police of various ranks also detailed they feel targeted after a consent decree required the city to alter policing practices after the Department of Justice found the police department engaged in civil rights violations, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

The crime spike in Chicago since 2020 follows a national trend that showed murders spiking by about 30% in 2020 compared to 2019, marking the largest single-year increase in killings since the agency began tracking the crimes, according to FBI data.

[Crime experts](#) who previously spoke to Fox News Digital have pointed to the defund the police movement, the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdowns that upended society, along with the Ferguson effect.

"Certainly, the protests and riots mid-2020 after the death of George Floyd followed a pattern of spiking violence that we've seen following past viral police incidents, such as the deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray. This pattern has been termed the 'Ferguson Effect': police pull back while violent crime spikes precipitously," Hannah Meyers, director of the policing and public safety initiative at the Manhattan Institute, told Fox News Digital earlier this year.

One crime researcher who spoke to the Chicago-Sun Times reported similar findings, pointing to fallout from the pandemic for police pulling back, and speculating the riots and protests of 2020 could have caused crime to increase.

"What comes through is that context matters, the context of this decline in police activity and arrests," crime researcher Deepak Premkumar told the outlet. "When there is a high-profile event, the community scrutiny increases, [police] activity drops."

"There are so many factors related to the pandemic that could have led police to pull back and for crimes to increase," Premkumar says. "But it's entirely possible that the murder of George Floyd, the highest-profile [police killing] in U.S. history, played a role in increases in crime."

As the police pull back in the city, the department has also been coping with staffing issues. Chicago P.D. saw the lowest number of staffers in March of this year after 300 personnel resigned or retired from the department and over a dozen more had stepped down.

HEADLINE	07/19 Crime, inflation hit inner city communities
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/crime-inflation-deal-devastating-one-two-blow-inner-city-communities">https://www.foxnews.com/us/crime-inflation-deal-devastating-one-two-blow-inner-city-communities</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Crime waves swept major cities</a> across the country two years ago amid the summer of 2020's protests and riots and the coronavirus lockdowns that upended society. Crime has continued raging in many cities while residents cope with a heavy cost that has been compounded by record-high inflation.</p> <p>"As a purely factual matter, prices do tend to be higher -- and the quality of service and products lower -- in stores in low-income neighborhoods," economist Thomas Sowell wrote in an opinion piece in 2006.</p> <p>He said that many "ghetto stores" charge higher prices for a bevy of reasons, including "crime, shoplifting, vandalism and riots have raised the costs, both directly and by causing insurance rates and the costs of security to be higher."</p> <p>Sowell's words have proven true in recent years. Commercial insurance rose in 2021 following the George Floyd protests and riots of the summer prior, which marked "the first civil disorder catastrophe event to exceed \$1 billion in losses to the insurance industry," according to the World Economic Forum. Battered stores in cities have taken extra security measures and even cut operating hours to help curb rampant shoplifting.</p> <p>Crime has ravaged major cities over the last two years, with murders nationally spiking by 30% in 2020 when compared to 2019. Those spikes were even more steep in cities like New York City, which recorded a 44% increase in homicides compared to the year prior, Seattle, which saw their homicide rate increased by 61% in 2020 and by 40% in Philadelphia when compared to 2019.</p> <p>Property crimes and thefts have also seen increases, including at businesses within cities. Most notably in California, cities such as Los Angeles and the Bay Area were ravaged by smash and grab crimes last year that have carried over into 2022.</p> <p>Rampant shoplifting caused stores such as Walgreens and other chains to close in cities throughout the Golden State. Convenience stores in Philadelphia have been "closing left and right" this year while a couple of pharmacies in New York City closed up shop after reports they were repeated targets of shoplifting.</p> <p>For many people living in those cities, a store closure means a disruption of how people get things as simple as bread or milk, and can add additional transportation costs.</p> <p>"If you're middle class or upper class, if Walgreens closes, it's not that big of a deal, maybe a minor inconvenience. But you can probably pretty easily drive an extra couple miles to the next closest store," Heritage Foundation legal fellow Zack Smith told Fox News Digital.</p> <p>However, "if you're someone who is one of the poorer members of our communities, that Walgreens closing or a grocery store having reduced hours, that's a big deal. You may not be able to walk the extra few miles, you may not be able to get public transportation to go the extra few miles. If you're working, reduced hours can impact your availability to get basic needs met," he added.</p> <p>Historically, people <a href="#">living in cities</a> have carried heavier costs at local grocery stores and bodegas. A government study published in 1997 found that low-income households are less likely to live in suburban areas where food prices are typically cheaper.</p> <p>"Suburban supermarkets typically have the lowest food prices and widest selection, but poor people tend to live in central cities and rural areas. Grocery stores in central cities have higher operating costs and tend to be smaller and unable to take advantage of economies of size," the study found.</p> <p>Additionally, there are unseen costs to Americans living in crime-riddled cities that have an incalculable impact.</p>

"The impact is almost immeasurable," the Heritage Foundation's Amy Swearer told Fox News Digital when asked about the cost crime has on communities in cities.

"You can measure it in some terms of ... stores that are leaving [cities]. But there's sort of the immeasurable impact: Kids who are afraid to walk to school. How do you measure PTSD? How do you measure fear? How do you measure people deciding not to go to a store today?"

While crime has loomed large over cities and its communities, inflation has also dealt a heavy blow.

Inflation is at a 40-year-high, and estimates show it cost the average American household about \$635 in June alone. Studies have found [inflation often hurts](#) low-income families, minority communities and Americans in rural parts of the nation the most. Low-income households are often "exposed" to items hit the hardest by inflation, such as energy and food, while lower levels of savings and incomes are unable to easily absorb the higher costs compared to wealthier households, a Bank of America study published in November found.

For many, inflation is a financial double whammy. Coronavirus lockdowns destroyed businesses across the country and workers were laid off or had hours cuts, which left many Americans financially struggling before inflation set them further back.

For some city residents who rely on their local grocers, they have been driven to tears by inflation and store closures.

"I have seen tears and laughter," Tony Moore, who runs a group home in central Kenosha, Wisconsin, recently told Kenosha News of inflation squeezing his neighborhood. "I've seen people cry, because what are we going to do? And I see people laugh because what can we do?"

[In California](#), residents of San Francisco have relayed that the closures of Walgreens have been devastating.

"That Walgreens was essential, at least for my family," Gina Mullins said of a Walgreens closing in the Mission District last year, according to the Guardian. "It's closer than Safeway, has more items than the corner store, and they have a pharmacy attached. It's been a staple, so to see them shutting down in neighborhoods that really need them is heartbreaking."

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HEADLINE	07/18 Blaze that injured firefighter ruled as arson
SOURCE	<a href="https://westseattleblog.com/2022/07/followup-20th-roxbury-townhouse-fire-ruled-arson/">https://westseattleblog.com/2022/07/followup-20th-roxbury-townhouse-fire-ruled-arson/</a>
GIST	Two days after <a href="#">the afternoon fire</a> that damaged an unfinished townhouse building in the 9400 block of 20th SW, just north of SW Roxbury, <b>Seattle Fire</b> says its investigators have determined that it was arson.  SFD spokesperson <b>Kristin Tinsley</b> tells WSB this morning, "The fire was determined to have been intentionally set (incendiary)." That makes it a <a href="#">Seattle Police</a> investigation.  Tinsley says damage is estimated at \$195,000. As we reported Saturday, a firefighter was injured (we're checking back on their condition).
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HEADLINE	07/18 Law enforcement agencies Uvalde probes
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/07/18/uvalde-shooting-report-reaction/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/07/18/uvalde-shooting-report-reaction/</a>
GIST	A day after <a href="#">a Texas House report</a> found that systemic failures caused the bungled law enforcement response to the Uvalde, Tex., school shooting, state and local officials pressed their own internal probes to determine what their individual agents and officers did and did not do during the May 24 massacre.

Gov. Greg Abbott (R) called the findings “beyond disturbing” and said they must trigger “critical changes.” But Abbott, who is running for reelection, did not address specific issues raised in the report. Hours later, the state Department of Public Safety said it had begun to review the actions of every trooper, officer, agent and ranger at the scene to “determine if any violations of policy, law, or doctrine occurred,” according to an emailed statement.

The [77-page detailed account](#) released to families of the victims and survivors on Sunday and then to the public, represented the most exhaustive account of the shooting inside Robb Elementary School so far. After weeks of competing narratives by agencies seeking to blame others for the assault that ended with 19 children and two teachers killed by a teenage gunman, the committee did not single out one department but spread the blame across various agencies and the school system for failing to prepare for and stop the carnage.

Local officials, including the incident commander, Pedro “Pete” Arredondo of the school police department, did not take charge and officers from other agencies did not fill the void, the report said. The result was chaos that extended the time before the gunman was confronted and killed.

Hours after the report was released, Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin announced the suspension of Uvalde police Lt. Mariano Pargas, who was acting chief on May 24. The police officer is also a recently reelected Uvalde County commissioner. Pargas did not respond to messages about the reasons prompting his leave. An email sent to his county email address bounced back and his phone number was disconnected.

Uvalde city leaders will investigate whether Pargas was responsible for taking command, what specific actions he took to establish command, whether it was feasible to take command and “other possible policy violations,” McLaughlin said.

Southwest Texas Junior College President Hector Gonzales was in the room when committee members walked families through their preliminary conclusions. The facts were no surprise after weeks of media leaks and public testimony from state law enforcers, but they were no less searing, he said.

Families, he said, are still absorbing the dense report but their next logical step is to seek accountability. Local leaders across the region need to offer reassurances that they are taking note and correcting the mistakes, he said.

“We need to take that report as a call to action to make sure we, as leaders of our institutions, make the necessary changes to address these shortcomings,” said Gonzales, who hosted the meeting between lawmakers and families. “We can’t let this happen again. We all have a role, whether it be calling on our colleagues and speaking up. We need to help advocate for those changes that are necessary.”

The report cited a lax culture around school safety protocols within Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District schools that left Robb Elementary unprepared for an attack of this kind. In response, Superintendent Hal Harrell said in a statement that the district is taking steps to reinforce its security, including installing new perimeter fencing and cameras, upgrading door locks and hiring additional school police and campus personnel.

Arredondo resigned from the city council but is still employed as the school district police chief. In its statement, the district did not indicate whether his status has changed. The district placed him on administrative leave last month.

The report named more than 20 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies involved in the response and rescue at Robb Elementary. U.S. Border Patrol and the Texas DPS supplied more than half of the nearly 400 troopers and agents near or on school grounds that day, the report said.

The parent agency of the Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection, said it is conducting its own review of its response through the Office of Professional Responsibility but has not yet reached any conclusions. About 145 agents were there, arriving from as far as 70 miles away from Uvalde, and worked

to help evacuate students from other classrooms. Border Patrol agents also were part of the team that ultimately confronted and killed Salvador Ramos more than 77 minutes after he fired the first round.

Only one Border Patrol agent wore a body camera, in part because the agency has not fully implemented its camera program across all border sectors. Some agents at the scene were off duty or out of uniform, officials said.

CPB promised to share the results of its review. Officials also promised to work with state, federal and local government agencies “to answer the difficult questions on what went wrong.”

“We owe this to the Uvalde community, and the nation,” CBP officials said in a statement.

Several other local agencies did not respond to calls or requests for comment, including the Uvalde County Sheriff’s Office.

“The sheriff answers to the voters and the deputies answer to the sheriff,” Uvalde County Commissioner Ronald Garza said in response to a question about whether elected leaders could or would exercise any oversight. “We are still kind of shocked at the preliminary report, still chewing on it, and we are not sure what will happen.”

Garza’s colleagues on the commission and Uvalde County Judge Bill Mitchell did not respond to questions about their next steps.

Some agencies in the region are taking action and upgrading their active-shooter training.

Dilley Police Chief Homer Delgado said his officers arrived well after the shooting ended and helped with crowd control at the civic center, where a memorial began to form. In recent weeks, some of his officers participated in active-shooter drills alongside Border Patrol agents and they are looking at their own policies to make improvements, he said.

“Trust is restored by transparency, being open with the community and answering questions,” Delgado said. “If there are questions, I think any law enforcement agency has the responsibility to answer those questions. It’s important to explain to our communities what our policies are.”

Delgado, who is a close friend of Uvalde Police Chief Daniel Rodriguez, said he is withholding judgment on individuals but he said internal reviews are an important part of pushing an agency to evolve and meet the needs of the people they serve.

Gonzales, the college president, said the report makes clear what has to happen. He and his wife have supported the families of victims and survivors, counseling them and acting as a sounding board for the community’s emerging activism and demands for change.

Last week, his college endured a bomb threat. Officials evacuated the school, executed a multiagency plan and handed over command to a DPS major who assessed the situation within three minutes. No one was hurt. While the situations were different, he said, the comparison was striking.

“If that had occurred on May 24th, we more than likely would have had a different outcome,” he said. “I’m not going to say that should happen, but after a review if there is a need for change then that needs to occur, and there needs to be a process for that. The frustration is, that hasn’t been allowed to happen because of the hold on information. That is an important part of the process.”

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HEADLINE	07/18 Bystander kills gunman 2min. into spree
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/us/greenwood-indiana-mall-shooting.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/us/greenwood-indiana-mall-shooting.html</a>

## GIST

A 20-year-old man carrying a rifle and pistol with access to another rifle and more than 100 rounds of ammunition was killed by a bystander two minutes after he began spraying gunfire at diners inside a mall food court in Greenwood, Ind., the authorities said on Monday.

By that time, the gunman, identified by the police as Jonathan Douglas Sapirman, 20, had already killed three people and injured two others. But [the deadly spree on Sunday](#) was cut short by a 22-year-old bystander carrying a handgun while shopping with his girlfriend.

Chief Jim Ison of the Greenwood Police Department called the bystander's actions "nothing short of heroic," identifying him as Elisjsa Dicken of Seymour, Ind.

"He engaged the gunman from quite a distance with a handgun, was very proficient in that, very tactically sound, and, as he moved to close in on the suspect, he was also motioning for people to exit behind him," Chief Ison said at a news conference where he described surveillance video footage of the shooting.

The Johnson County coroner identified the victims, who were all from Indianapolis, as Victor Gomez, 30; and a husband and wife, Pedro Pineda, 56, and Rosa Mirian Rivera de Pineda, 37. Two additional people were injured: a 22-year-old woman hospitalized with a leg wound and a 12-year-old girl struck by a bullet fragment.

All the victims were shot by Mr. Sapirman, who fired 24 rounds, Chief Ison said. Mr. Dicken fired 10 rounds, killing the gunman as he tried to retreat to a mall bathroom where he had spent an hour apparently preparing for the attack.

The chief said there was no clear motive for the shooting.

There were no indicators the gunman was violent or unstable, his family members told the police, but he had recently received an eviction notice and resigned from a warehouse position in May. Chief Ison said the gunman had previous encounters with the local police, including for a fight at school.

Over the past two years, the relatives told the police, the gunman had frequently practiced shooting at a range in Greenwood, which is roughly 15 miles south of Indianapolis.

ImageThe scene outside the mall on Sunday after the shooting that killed three people.

The scene outside the mall on Sunday after the shooting that killed three people.Credit...Lee Klafczynski for The New York Times

Mr. Sapirman brought three weapons into the Greenwood Park Mall, the police said: the gun he used in the shooting, a Sig Sauer M400 rifle he bought in March 2022; an M&P15 rifle that was found in the mall bathroom and bought in March 2021; and a Glock 33 pistol discovered on his body. The rifles were legally purchased in Greenwood, the police said.

When the gunman entered the mall just before 5 p.m., Chief Ison said, he walked directly to the food court's bathroom, spending about an hour inside before exiting and taking aim at dozens of people eating dinner.

Two minutes later, Mr. Dicken fatally shot the gunman.

When the police arrived, they handcuffed Mr. Dicken and took him to a station for questioning, where security camera footage confirmed his description of the events. Chief Ison said that the police could not determine whether Mr. Dicken had a gun permit, but that he was carrying his Glock 9-millimeter handgun legally under the state's constitutional carry law.

"This young man, Greenwood's good Samaritan, acted within seconds, stopping the shooter and saving countless lives," Mayor Mark Myers said on Monday.



	<p>Police officers served a search warrant on Sunday night at a Greenwood apartment where the gunman lived by himself, discovering a laptop and a can of butane inside the oven, which had been left on at a high temperature.</p> <p>The laptop had been damaged by the heat but would be analyzed, the chief said. The police are also trying to retrieve data from a waterlogged cellphone that they believe the gunman placed in a toilet in the mall bathroom.</p> <p>Greenwood, a city of about 63,000 people, has been shaken by the shooting.</p> <p>“I don’t want to be among the mayors that has to share these statements, but, sadly, I am,” Mr. Myers said. “I grieve for these senseless killings, and I ache for the scars that are left behind on the victims and on our community.”</p> <p>Hours after the shooting at the mall, four people were shot, one of them fatally, at an unrelated vigil in a park in Beech Grove, nine miles north of Greenwood.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Seattle Capitol Hill gun violence has tripled</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/gun-violence-in-seattles-capitol-hill-neighborhood-has-tripled-in-past-year">https://komonews.com/news/local/gun-violence-in-seattles-capitol-hill-neighborhood-has-tripled-in-past-year</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Gun violence in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood has more than tripled in the first half of 2022, when compared to last year, according to the Seattle Police crime dashboard.</p> <p>A shooting outside a nightclub over the weekend sent one person to the hospital and forced businesses to board up shattered windows.</p> <p>“My first reaction was concern for people’s safety,” Rob Haggerty of the nearby Rapha bike shop stated. The store was among the few businesses hit by gunfire over the weekend. “We came inside and found, like, bullet casings. There was this sort of glass. If you look up there’s bullet holes in the residence above, as well.”</p> <p>SPD estimates more than 50 shots rang out near a nightclub around 2:30 a.m. Sunday morning, injuring a 35-year-old man.</p> <p>Seattle police found what appears to be a ghost gun, which the state banned starting in early July.</p> <p>It's upsetting for locals like Floyd Raught to see the boarded-up windows while showing this area to a visitor.</p> <p>“It’s not really going to deter me from walking around and shopping and hanging out in this neighborhood but it’s unfortunate that we’re all kind of desensitized to the shootings that have been going on,” Raught explained.</p> <p>The number of shootings that caused injuries or property damage in Capitol Hill this year (12 as of the end of June), has more than tripled last year's total of four.</p> <p>SPD's crime dashboard shows there was also one deadly shooting in January.</p> <p>Raught and Haggerty agree more needs to be done to protect people and businesses.</p> <p>“I know there’s been problems downtown and some businesses have decided to leave some areas downtown so long-term that could potentially happen here,” Haggerty said.</p>

	<p>Police have not said if they have any suspect leads. A 33-year-old man who was shot in the arm early Sunday went to Harborview, but detectives are still looking into whether he was involved in the shooting.</p> <p>The mayor's office said in an emailed statement that it is working to address and prevent gun violence city-wide. That includes building community-based partnerships, hiring more police officers, and taking on state pre-emptions so the city can pass new, innovative, and effective gun laws.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/18 Lynnwood police evidence room explosion</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/north-sound-news/officers-injured-during-small-explosion-inside-lynnwood-police-evidence-room/CESTRNMMRFX5KLOUMFRVM4EXY/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/north-sound-news/officers-injured-during-small-explosion-inside-lynnwood-police-evidence-room/CESTRNMMRFX5KLOUMFRVM4EXY/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Officers cataloging evidence were injured after an explosion inside the evidence room on Saturday, according to the Lynnwood Police Department.</p> <p>At around 9 a.m. on July 16, officers responded to a report of abandoned drug paraphernalia and clothing at a hobby store at the corner of 193rd Street SW and 60th Avenue West.</p> <p>An officer retrieved the items, returned to the police station and was in the process of cataloging and weighing when a small ball of unknown powder exploded on the table.</p> <p>According to police, the blast was very loud and concussive, and caused a piece of material to become lodged in a TV screen.</p> <p>Two officers in the room suffered ringing in their ears and one had an unknown piece of shrapnel in his cheek.</p> <p>As dust filled the room, officers became concerned of possible exposure to dangerous chemicals.</p> <p>As the fire department responded, officers evacuated the building.</p> <p>Both officers were transported to a hospital and released with no serious injuries.</p> <p>After an investigation, the area was deemed safe and uncontaminated.</p> <p>Investigators believe the explosion was caused by a homemade concoction of volatile chemicals.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/18 Gun violence impact Portland businesses</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/increases-in-gun-violence-impact-portland-businesses-oregon-downtown-west-east-north-police-hospital-shooting">https://komonews.com/news/local/increases-in-gun-violence-impact-portland-businesses-oregon-downtown-west-east-north-police-hospital-shooting</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. — Homicides and non-fatal shootings are on the rise in Portland.</p> <p>Three of them took place early this morning in North and Southeast Portland.</p> <p>Business owners say they are worried about the impacts on their clients.</p> <p>A man and a woman died early this morning after a shooting that happened on 26th and Belmont just before 3 a.m.</p> <p>Police have not released the age or identity of the victims, but what we do know is the man died at the scene while police tell us the woman succumbed to her wounds at the hospital.</p> <p>In a separate incident at 2:15 a.m., a man was wounded at a shooting on the 300 block of West Burnside.</p>

Minutes later shots rang out again just a few blocks from there, thankfully no more injuries were reported.

The uptick in homicides and gun violence is pushing businesses to shutter and loyal clients to change who they patronize.

The Buckman neighborhood where two lost their lives to gun violence early Sunday morning is mostly residential. Homes line the streets punctuated by neighborhood bars, restaurants, and local boutique businesses.

It's an area of Portland where visitors and residents expect to be relatively safe.

According to a study done by the California Partnership for Safe Communities, Portland has seen a 144% increase in homicides from 2019 to 2021. When we look at non-fatal shootings that number goes up to a 241% increase.

Compared to gun violence in other similarly sized cities, the study shows Portland's problem is much more pronounced.

Homicide rates for the other cities listed in the report:



*Homicide rates for select cities from the "Portland Homicide Problem Analysis 2019-2021"*

Business owners in a southeast Portland neighborhood tell me they are concerned the uptick will drive away customers.

The study shows that African-American men were disproportionally impacted by gun violence. It also notes that about 58% of both victims and suspects had felony convictions.

The study suggests that social circles have a lot to do with a resident's likelihood of becoming another shooting victim.

Most times victims were known to their shooters or were friends with someone else involved in the incident.

HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Shooting victim found dead Seattle ID park</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/shooting-victim-found-dead-international-district-park/UO7RD65JNRB7NMDEGMZ3WVOHAM/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/shooting-victim-found-dead-international-district-park/UO7RD65JNRB7NMDEGMZ3WVOHAM/</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — A man was found dead in a park in the Chinatown-International District on Sunday afternoon.</p> <p>At 2:54 p.m., police were called to Kobe Terrace Park for reports of a drug overdose.</p> <p>Officers arrived to find a man slumped over near a bench.</p> <p>When officers tried to revive the man, they saw he was clearly dead and had apparently been shot, according to a post on the <a href="#">Seattle Police Department Blotter</a>.</p> <p>Members of the Seattle Police Department’s crime scene investigation unit were summoned to process the scene.</p> <p>Homicide detectives will continue to investigate the case.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Seattle homeless camp shooting: 1 dead</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/man-killed-in-shooting-at-north-seattle-homeless-encampment/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/man-killed-in-shooting-at-north-seattle-homeless-encampment/</a>
GIST	<p>Seattle police detectives are investigating after a man was shot and killed at an encampment in North Seattle on Sunday night.</p> <p>Police said officers were called to an encampment near North 96th Street and Aurora Avenue North around 9:50 p.m. for reports that someone had been shot.</p> <p>It is unclear what relationship the shooter or victim had to the encampment.</p> <p>When officers arrived, police and Seattle Fire Department medics attempted life-saving measures on the 38-year-old man, but medics eventually declared the man dead, <a href="#">police said on their online blotter</a>.</p> <p>Homicide detectives are investigating.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Mount Vernon Walmart shooting: 5 injured</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/5-injured-in-shooting-in-mount-vernon-walmart/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/5-injured-in-shooting-in-mount-vernon-walmart/</a>
GIST	<p>A customer and an employee of the Walmart in Mount Vernon, along with three 19-year-old men, were injured in a shooting inside the store Sunday night, <a href="#">according to Mount Vernon police</a>.</p> <p>Officers were called to the store in the 2300 block of Freeway Drive for reports of shots being fired inside the building shortly before 10 p.m., according to the Mount Vernon Police Department.</p> <p>Police investigators believe the shooting occurred after a group of men entered the store and got into “an altercation” with another group of men already inside the store, police said.</p> <p>A 72-year-old customer and a 24-year-old employee were injured, as were three 19-year-old men who had been involved in the altercation, police said.</p> <p>According to police, three people were taken to Skagit Valley Hospital by medics and two others arrived in private vehicles.</p> <p>Police said they did not know the current conditions of the people injured.</p>

	Mount Vernon police said in a press release that there was no sign the men entered the store to create an “active threat event.”
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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Covid contributed to Tacoma crime wave?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article263042703.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article263042703.html</a>
GIST	<p>Several bay windows at Ed Tuck’s family automotive services shop in South Tacoma were shot out in late June with what Tuck believed to be a pellet or BB gun.</p> <p>Around the same period, someone caused “a hell of a lot of damage” when, according to Tuck, they cut a hole in the fence of an adjacent storage company to gain access to his establishment, T &amp; T Tire Point S, and ripped through the metal building and into a support stud. He said he did not believe anything was stolen, unlike in mid-February, when he received the unwelcome call that 16 sets of customer, employee or company vehicle keys, two vehicles and a gun had been swiped, along with roughly \$450 in cash.</p> <p>“This is not only an inconvenience,” he said, referring to the rash of criminal activity.</p> <p>“It’s affecting the bottom line to our business.” It is a plight that officials and other business owners say they know all too well.</p> <p>Property crimes, which include offenses such as burglary and motor vehicle theft, have risen during the pandemic in Tacoma and unincorporated Pierce County, including University Place and Edgewood, according to a News Tribune analysis of law enforcement data. They went up 20.7 percent in the county between 2019 and 2021, and increased 7.4 percent in Tacoma over roughly the same period.</p> <p>Law enforcement and government officials point to multiple reasons for the uptick, including increased desperation fueled by the pandemic, difficulties in recruiting and retaining police officers who they say feel underappreciated, and state criminal justice reforms that changed how law enforcement can respond to certain calls.</p> <p>Officials say there is another factor to consider: Most people arrested for property and other lower-level crimes have not been booked into the Pierce County Jail during the pandemic.</p> <p>Jail protocols have limited pre-trial holds largely to violent offenses to try to avoid spreading COVID-19 into the facility. As a result, those arrested for lesser crimes have been getting released with a court date. The county’s jail population has plummeted over the last two years.</p> <p>On a case-by-case basis, law enforcement may request exceptions to booking restrictions, but they depend on factors including the seriousness of the crime and COVID-19 conditions in the jail.</p> <p>While the protocols follow the lead of local health officials and nationwide best practices for correctional facilities, the practice of limiting who goes to jail has unintentionally given the impression that there are no consequences to committing certain crimes, some officials say.</p> <p>“You see these businesses and homes that have been broken into multiple times,” Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier said. “We got to get back to when people break the law, they are held accountable to it.”</p> <p>Others contend that the catch-and-release has emboldened repeat offenders.</p> <p>Prosecuting Attorney Mary Robnett said her office has seen defendants suspected of committing four, five or six separate offenses — including vehicle theft, possession of a firearm and burglary — and each time avoid jail.</p> <p>The case of Gene Hiblar, the 19-year-old who pleaded guilty in May to burglarizing T &amp; T Tire Point S and other crimes, presents one example of a defendant cycling in and out of custody. By the time Hiblar</p>

was arrested in March for ramming a vehicle into a bar and rummaging through the cash register, he had six outstanding felony warrants, court records show.

In a short span from April 2021 to his final arrest in March before he was sentenced to nearly 30 months in prison, Hiblar had built a lengthy criminal history around South Tacoma that included nine commercial burglary or vehicle theft-related cases.

In some cases, Hiblar was identified as a suspect but not caught. But in repeated instances, records show, he was released from custody after being arrested and subsequently failed to appear in court.

“It feels like there’s been the perfect storm, if you will, that has allowed crime to get out of control,” Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards said, citing jail booking limitations as part of the equation, although she said in a June interview that she had not reviewed any data to discern what exact role it might be playing.

“At this point, I don’t need a measurement to tell me that we’re not getting enough people in jail,” she said.

Year-over-year statistics during the pandemic were difficult to compare, Tacoma Police Chief Avery Moore cautioned, since no two years during the public health crisis have been exact in terms of conditions, such as orders affecting social movements. Still, he agreed that jail policies meant to protect inmates and staff have given rise to opportunistic criminals.

“Those who engage in those behaviors that society has said is inappropriate, is criminal, they need to go to jail. And that’s how you stop it,” Moore said. “So, yeah, there is an impact when people feel emboldened because they’re exploiting a pandemic.”

#### FOCUS ON REPEAT OFFENDERS

With officials frustrated, and saying they have heard frustrations from the community, jail booking protocols were significantly relaxed in March and expanded to detain people arrested for a broader range of crimes: Organized retail theft, second-degree burglary and stealing motor vehicles, among them.

The updated protocol also provided guidance to detain a contingent that multiple officials described as the top 100 people causing repeat problems in the community, such as defendants in vehicle theft and street-racing cases. The list was crafted with input from prosecutors and multiple law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, officials said.

The takeaway was clear, Robnett said: “Let’s get these people off the street.”

More than one-third of the accused offenders on the list had been booked into jail as of July 11, according to Steve Jones, the acting chief of corrections for the Sheriff’s Department, which oversees the jail. Most had warrants.

Hiblar’s name was on the list, Sheriff’s Department spokesperson Darren Moss confirmed.

“Honestly, when those 100 are done, we have another 100 right behind them,” Robnett said.

The effort expanding who should be booked into jail produced immediate results, according to Pierce County Sheriff Ed Troyer, who pointed to a dip in one of the region’s most prevalent crimes as an example.

The number of reported stolen vehicles throughout Pierce County hovered above 900 during each of the first three months of this year, according to data from the Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force. When booking limitations relaxed in April and May, the tally decreased to roughly 800 and just below 700, respectively.



“Look at how it goes down when we do put people in jail,” Troyer said. “It’s not that much more complicated than that.”

The so-called “soft reopening” of the downtown Tacoma facility also came with a cost.

By late May, the push to increase admissions into the jail was largely reversed and reverted to stricter booking limitations after a COVID-19 outbreak the month prior, illustrating that there remains risks to bringing more people into custody.

#### AT THE MERCY OF A VIRUS

The most recent COVID-19 outbreak lasted a month to six weeks, roughly the same time span as previous bouts with the virus, according to Jones, who said no inmates or staff had to be hospitalized. Only one inmate had ever been taken to the hospital for COVID-19, Jones added, and he did not stay because the hospital was short-staffed and he was not sick enough.

Through June, the jail has had 416 total reported cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began, according to figures provided by the Sheriff’s Department. The agency reported 184 cases during the first six months of 2022, compared to just 85 over the same period last year, indicating that 2022 appears on pace to be worse.

There were 54 cases during the recent outbreak in April and May, the figures show.

“We’re just kind of at the mercy of — if we open up, it does put us at more risk,” Jones said. “But at some point, we still need to be a jail.”

Making matters more challenging, staffing woes are prevalent inside the jail, which is short roughly 40 correctional deputies, Troyer said, which also affects how many inmates the jail can safely hold.

#### THE CASE FOR LIMITED DETENTION

Michael Kawamura, the director of the county’s Department of Assigned Counsel, which represents defendants who cannot afford a private lawyer, said that keeping the jail safe was “an obvious concern for everyone.”

Kawamura said he believed jail officials have thus far been vigilant in making booking decisions based on those concerns, and that there would obviously be needs to detain certain individuals.

“But at the same token, it raises questions about — there’s also the flip side of it,” he said. “There are people detained pre-trial that probably don’t need to be there.”

While Kawamura acknowledged the risk of repeat offenders, he said that more often than not, people get released from custody without causing new problems.

Jaime Hawk, the legal strategy director for the ACLU of Washington’s Smart Justice Campaign, warned against tying crime rates to incarceration trends, saying she has long heard the narrative that jails were not booking enough people.

“It’s been easy to kind of point at folks being released pre-trial as some kind of causal impact about what crime rates are happening,” Hawk said. “That, I think we need to be really, really careful about.”

Instead, she said, it would be more meaningful to address the root causes behind the crime wave, noting that property crimes are often driven by economic struggles. She preferred to focus on the fact that there are success stories of people who have avoided months of sitting behind bars because they have no ability to pay bail.

When Hawk was told about the concerns of law enforcement and government officials, she said it sounded like many people were cycling through the criminal justice system, which she said was evidence of its

systemic failure, and she questioned what steps were being taken long-term to change bad behaviors, including by developing case management.

“If incarceration was going to solve all our problems, we would have achieved that by now,” she said.

Steep reductions in jail populations during the pandemic — which occurred across the United States, at least initially — have been viewed by some, including Hawk, as a positive step toward eliminating overcrowded facilities and mass incarceration, which has disproportionately affected Black people and other minorities.

Hawk authored a piece in August 2020 that advocated for the state’s jails to permanently adopt the practices that resulted in them shedding significant inmate populations at the beginning of the pandemic. Unaffordable bail locked people into jail and put them at risk of losing jobs, homes and custody of their children, she wrote, as she called for pre-trial detention to remain reserved only for those suspected of the most serious crimes.

Reserving jail bed space for serious defendants has largely been the status quo in Pierce County during the pandemic. Today the jail is filled predominantly with felony defendants. As property crimes increased across the region between 2019 and 2021, so too did violent or person-on-person crimes, such as homicide and assault, albeit at a slighter rate, according to a News Tribune analysis of Sheriff’s Department-provided data and Tacoma Police Department crime briefing reports.

#### JAIL POPULATION NOSEDIVES

The average daily population at the jail, which is budgeted to hold nearly 1,300 inmates, decreased by more than 45 percent between 2019 and 2021, Sheriff’s Department-provided data shows.

The number of bookings in Pierce County decreased 63 percent over the same period, according to the county’s Criminal Justice Dashboard.

At the onset of the pandemic, the jail released inmates serving time or awaiting trial for property crimes and restricted new bookings in March 2020 to only serious felonies and mandatory misdemeanors, which include certain domestic-violence cases, in an effort to reduce the likelihood of a COVID-19 outbreak.

From February 2020 to July 2020, the average daily number of inmates fell from 1,013 to 506, jail data shows.

The ACLU of Washington, which has been tracking jail populations across the state, found that the number of inmates statewide similarly decreased in the first few months of the public health crisis as jails sought to limit the flow of people into the facilities.

The average statewide daily population dipped from 11,435 in 2019 to a pandemic low of 6,335 in April 2020, but had since risen to 8,435 by March of this year, according to the organization’s compilation of figures.

Beginning in July 2021, the Pierce County Jail began to make major but incremental changes to its booking protocols as it worked with courts, public defenders, prosecutors and law enforcement “to return to a new ‘normal’ in a staged timeline,” records show.

It was not until April 18 of this year, however, in the midst of the biggest push since the pandemic began to book more accused offenders into jail, when the number of inmates reached a pandemic-era high above 800. After jail officials restored many previous booking restrictions following the COVID-19 outbreak, the population slid to 775 by June 23, according to Jones, who said the goal now was to whittle that number back down into the 600s.

In reviewing the trend of jail population, it is worth noting other potential factors, including that arrests slid 31 percent from 2019 to 2020, the most recent year with publicly available data. Robnett said her

office also saw criminal referrals from law enforcement decline from more than 9,100 in 2019 to fewer than 6,900 in 2021.

Criminal justice reforms, including a 2021 bill that limited law enforcement vehicle pursuits and has resulted in fewer people pulling over for police, have played a major role in the reduction of arrests, according to Troyer, who also noted that resources were thin because the Sheriff's Department was short nearly 50 patrol officers.

Also, judges can choose to release defendants on their own recognizance after the initial booking decision is made.

#### BUSINESSES WANT MORE ACTION

Despite officials' efforts to address what they view as one contribution to a rise in lower-level offenses throughout Pierce County, some business owners do not see it as enough. They questioned police response times and the city's response to a growing homelessness problem.

Tuck noted that it took police more than eight hours to arrive on scene after the February burglary at his shop. When news of the crime was picked up by two local television stations, that lengthy wait became headlines. A Tacoma Police Department spokesperson told KOMO News and KING 5 News that they understood the frustration but calls were prioritized by life safety issues first.

Lua Pritchard, executive director of the Asia Pacific Cultural Center in South Tacoma, said police also were slow to respond after the center was victimized by thieves who swiped computers and cultural items. On other occasions, people have stolen things out of vehicles in the parking lot, she said, adding that such incidents have become more prevalent during the pandemic.

"I don't know why," she said. "Because people are more hurting for more money, or whatever."

Greg Hersey, owner of Superior Linen & Uniform Rental Services, located just south of the Hilltop neighborhood, said that no fewer than seven businesses in his square block, including his own, have been struck at least three times by break-ins since late last summer.

Hersey said thieves have cut holes in his fence to steal a catalytic converter from one of his trucks and, only recently, eight oxygen sensors off catalytic converters — a crime that he said puzzled him.

"There is no consequence," he said.

Aware of limited bookings at the jail, Hersey said he did not bother to call police to report those crimes, and he noted that police had "other things to do other than chase these knuckleheads around." He also criticized what he called the "vilification and disregard" of law enforcement that he said has come about in recent years and, in his opinion, has contributed to a climate where criminals "run the show."

He said he believed that the crimes had been committed by a small portion of unhoused individuals, noting there was a growing number of encampments and motor homes nearby. Both he and Tuck said they did not think that Tacoma leaders have adequately addressed the city's homelessness issue.

Woodards assured that the city was taking steps to improve public safety, including with a recently unveiled three-phase crime plan and by focusing on root causes, such as providing more economic stability through rental assistance and other programs.

"Tacoma is not the place," she said, "where you can come and get away with crime."

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HEADLINE	07/18 NYPD: major crime in NYC skyrockets 37%
SOURCE	<a href="https://nypost.com/2022/07/18/major-crime-skyrockets-37-in-nyc-nypd-data-shows/">https://nypost.com/2022/07/18/major-crime-skyrockets-37-in-nyc-nypd-data-shows/</a>

GIST	<p>Major crimes in New York City have skyrocketed 37% so far this year — driven by grand larcenies, auto thefts, burglaries and robberies, according to NYPD data.</p> <p>Grand larceny has shot up 49% so far this year over last year as of Sunday — from 18,058 to 26,908. Auto theft has spiked by 46.2%, from 4,855 to 7,100.</p> <p>Robbery is up 39.2%, from 6,530 to 9,091, and burglaries increased by 32.9%, from 6,251 to 8,305, the numbers show.</p> <p>Felonious assault rose by 18.6% and rapes saw an 11% increase so far this year over 2021 .</p> <p>“This is going to probably be a record year for increasing crime in New York City,” said Joseph Giacalone, a John Jay College of Criminal Justice professor and a former NYPD sergeant.</p> <p>“You have a short-staffed NYPD and you still have policies that go against police work,” he said.</p> <p>Giacalone called the huge increase in car thefts “something right out of the 1990s.”</p> <p>Murders, meanwhile, were down 5.6% so far this year over the same period in 2021, from 252 to 238. The number of people shot fell by 7.3%, from 974 to 903, the data shows. Shooting incidents were down 10.3 % this year, 747 compared to 833.</p> <p>Giacolone said that grim tally could change in an instant.</p> <p>“Shootings were up big last week, they took a break this week,” Giacolone said. “That’s good news, but that could all change with one BBQ in Brooklyn.”</p> <p>A Manhattan detective with two decades on the job agreed.</p> <p>“There’s going to be a heat wave,” he said. “The shootings will get worse. We don’t have enough manpower to compete with all the crime that’s going on.”</p> <p>Transit crime was also soaring, the police figures show.</p> <p>The six major crime categories were up 55.5% in transit so far in 2022 with 1,244 crimes as compared to 800 in the same period of 2021, the data show.</p> <p>The spike was led by a 250% jump in rapes from two at this point last year and seven so far in 2022.</p> <p>There was also a 47.7% increase in robberies from 222 to 328 and a 96.3% increase in grand larcenies from 298 to 585, the figures show. Felonious assault increased 17.5% from 269 to 316.</p>
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HEADLINE	07/19 Arrest highlights Saudis deep reach into US
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-canada-arrests-dubai-united-arab-emirates-9d04fff334bfc0702c9dc186b01c3f3c">https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-canada-arrests-dubai-united-arab-emirates-9d04fff334bfc0702c9dc186b01c3f3c</a>
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — It began with a message that appeared on Danah al-Mayouf’s phone from an anonymous Instagram account — a promise to help her “crush” a \$5 million lawsuit she faced from a pro-government Saudi fashion model.</p> <p>But, the mystery texter said, she had to meet him in person.</p> <p>It was December 2019, a year after the killing and <a href="#">dismemberment of prominent U.S.-based Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi</a> at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, and al-Mayouf feared possibly being kidnapped and <a href="#">taken back to the kingdom like others</a>.</p>

“I can’t meet someone I don’t know,” al-Mayouf ultimately responded. “Especially with all the kidnappings and killings.”

Now, she’s glad she didn’t go. U.S. federal prosecutors have arrested the man behind the messages, 42-year-old Ibrahim Alhussayen, on charges of lying to federal officials about using the fake account to harass and threaten Saudi critics — mostly women — living in the U.S. and Canada.

A spokesperson for the FBI declined to comment on the charges. A lawyer for Alhussayen did not respond to multiple requests for comment, nor did the Saudi Embassy in Washington.

A complaint unsealed last month in federal court in Brooklyn points to a wider investigation into online harassment campaigns targeting Saudi dissidents in the U.S. and their relatives — part of a trend of transnational repression that has alarmed American authorities in recent years as various autocratic governments seek to punish critics overseas.

Earlier this year, for instance, the Justice Department revealed a plot by operatives acting on behalf of the [Chinese government to stalk, harass and surveil dissidents](#) in the U.S.

The complaint comes as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman continues to clamp down on opposition, both in the kingdom and abroad, while working to burnish an image as a liberal reformer. The Saudi government has maintained in the past that its critics incite violence, broadly defined, and pose a threat to the kingdom’s security.

Nonetheless, President Joe Biden met — and [shared a cordial fist-bump with](#) — Prince Mohammed at a diplomatic summit last week in Saudi Arabia.

The scenes drew scathing criticism from fellow Democrats and rights groups after Biden had vowed to treat the kingdom like a “pariah” and deemed Prince Mohammed responsible for Khashoggi’s killing. From Jeddah, Biden said he raised Khashoggi’s “outrageous” murder with Prince Mohammed and was “straightforward and direct” about human rights issues, without elaborating.

“If anything like that occurs again,” Biden said of Saudi government efforts to target dissidents abroad, “they’ll get that response and much more.”

While some accuse Biden of abandoning his promise to put human rights at the heart of his foreign policy with his trip to the kingdom, the arrest of Alhussayen in New York underscores that federal officials are increasingly scrambling to prevent those rights abuses from occurring on U.S. soil.

The kingdom’s campaign to silence criticism has played out in America for some time. In 2019, U.S. prosecutors alleged Saudi Arabia [recruited two Twitter employees to spy on thousands of accounts](#) including those of American citizens and Saudi dissidents.

“This guy is just the tip of the iceberg,” said Abdullah Alaoudh, Gulf research director for Democracy for the Arab World Now, a Washington-based human rights watchdog. Alaoudh alleges he was also harassed by Alhussayen although he is not named in the complaint. “It’s a much larger campaign by the Saudi government to reach people outside.”

Alhussayen was a graduate student at two universities in Mississippi. But online, the FBI says he was “@samar16490,” an account that ruthlessly insulted and threatened young women on Instagram with the apparent aim of aiding the Saudi government.

Between January 2019 and August 2020, he allegedly maintained regular contact with a Saudi government employee who reported to an official at the royal court.

Prosecutors also said Alhussayen had taken screenshots of Khashoggi's Twitter posts dating back a year before his death and kept photos of Khashoggi on his phone this year, revealing an obsession with Saudi dissidents.

Alhussayen was charged with lying to federal authorities during three interviews between June 2021 and January 2022. The FBI says he told investigators he didn't use any social media accounts other than those in his own name.

Alhussayen's victims routinely checked their phones to discover new waves of vitriolic attacks. As women critical of the Saudi government, they said Alhussayen's warnings were part of a powerful campaign unleashed by legions of social media trolls.

"MBS will wipe you off the face of the earth, you will see," Alhussayen reportedly told al-Mayouf, the Saudi activist, referring to the crown prince by his initials.

He allegedly threatened al-Mayouf with the fate of well-known Saudi women imprisoned in the kingdom, filling his texts with expletives.

From New York, al-Mayouf hosts a popular YouTube show that delivers biting takes on Saudi-related current events and criticizes prominent officials.

For her and a few other victims, there were signs that Alhussayen's intentions went beyond causing offense.

After al-Mayouf rejected his help with the lawsuit and refused to meet, he lashed out. He attempted to obtain her location, the court filing said, "to surveil and further harass" her in person. The complaint did not elaborate.

"I do believe some of them are here, in the U.S.," she said of online bullies who flood her and her American fiancé with death threats each day. "I'm afraid something might happen to me."

She and her fiancé moved after pro-government accounts posted their home address on Twitter.

Moudi Aljohani, a prominent Saudi women's rights activist who petitioned for asylum in the U.S, also believes Alhussayen was trying to gain her trust and lure her into a face-to-face meeting.

After speaking out on social media against the country's male guardianship system, Aljohani fled the kingdom and the stifling grip of her parents in 2016. She fears her family will kill her if she returns.

Aljohani said she was shaken when Alhussayen reached out in 2020 from his fake Instagram account with a cryptic picture of her close family member.

But she, too, earned his ire when she didn't respond. Alhussayen allegedly told her he wanted to spit in her face. He said he hoped she met the same fate as Nada al-Qahtani, a Saudi woman who was fatally shot by her brother in a so-called "honor killing" in the kingdom in 2020.

In recent years, Aljohani has refrained from publicizing her critical opinions of the government because of what she described as a relentless smear campaign.

But a lower political profile hasn't helped. She, and the others, live in fear of their government's reach. "The Saudis are paying big money to fix their image and the way they see it, we're ruining it for them," Aljohani said. "I feel like there's no place that's safe."

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HEADLINE	07/18 Major details from Uvalde shooting report
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/major-details-committees-uvalde-mass-shooting-report/story?id=87008122">https://abcnews.go.com/US/major-details-committees-uvalde-mass-shooting-report/story?id=87008122</a>



A [scathing 77-page report](#) by a joint committee of the Texas Legislature contained new details of the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, and slammed the police response to the incident and the school district's lack of preparation for such an attack.

The report, which was made public Sunday after the committee reviewed it with many of the loved ones of the 19 students and two teachers killed in the May 24 shooting, detailed a number of major lapses in measures to fortify the school from intruders and the slow manner in which multiple law enforcement agencies mobilized to confront the heavily armed gunman.

While the committee said it found no "villains" other than the gunman to blame for the deadly attack, it found "systemic failures and egregious poor decision making" that prevented a speedy response to the rampage.

Here are five key takeaways from the committee's investigation of one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history.

### **School was unprepared**

In the report's opening pages, the committee cited the lack of preparation by the school district and the Robb Elementary staff to prevent an active shooter from getting onto the campus and into the school building.

"With hindsight, we can say Robb Elementary did not adequately prepare for the risk of an armed intruder on campus," the committee wrote.

The panel said the school's 5-foot-tall exterior fence, which surveillance video showed the gunman easily climbing to get onto the campus, was "inadequate to meaningfully impede an intruder."

More importantly, the committee found that while the school had adopted security policies to ensure exterior doors and internal classroom doors were locked while school was in session, those protocols were mostly ignored.

"There was a regrettable culture of noncompliance by school personnel who frequently propped doors open and deliberately circumvented locks," the committee said.

Such behavior, according to the committee, was "tacitly condoned" by the school administrators.

"In fact, the school actually suggested circumventing the locks as a solution for the convenience of substitute teachers and others who lacked their own key," the committee wrote.

### **School staff knew doors were unlocked**

The gunman entered the school through a door on the west side of the campus that didn't latch properly after a teacher had propped it open with a rock to bring in food from her car, investigators said.

"In violation of school policy, no one had locked any of the three exterior doors to the west building of Robb Elementary. As a result, the attacker had unimpeded access to enter," the committee reported.

The committee also faulted the school district for failing to treat the maintenance of doors with known faulty locks with "appropriate urgency."

"In particular, staff and students widely knew the door to one of the victimized classrooms, Room 111, was ordinarily unsecured and accessible," according to the committee's report. "Room 111 could be locked, but an extra effort was required to make sure the latch engaged," the report said.

### **No incident commander at the scene**

The committee found numerous "shortcomings and failures of the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District and of various agencies and officers of law enforcement" in the response to the shooting.

Chief of among them was that there was no designated incident commander at the scene as the massacre was unfolding.

"At Robb Elementary, law enforcement responders failed to adhere to their active shooter training, and they failed to prioritize saving lives of innocent victims over their own safety," the committee reported.

UCISD Police [Chief Pete Arredondo](#) and the commander of the Uvalde Police Department's SWAT team were among the first wave of law enforcement officers to arrive at the school. However, neither of them assumed the role of incident commander to coordinate the 376 law enforcement officers from local, state and federal agencies who quickly responded to the shooting, the committee said.

"The Uvalde CISD's written active shooter plan directed its police chief to assume command and control the response to an active shooter," according to the report.

But as the massacre unfolded, Arredondo allegedly failed to take on the role of incident commander or transfer the responsibility to another officer on scene, despite it being an "essential duty" he had assigned himself in the active shooter plan he helped write, the committee said.

"Yet it was not effectively performed by anyone," the committee wrote. "The void of leadership could have contributed to the loss of life as injured victims waited for over an hour for help, and the attacker continued to sporadically fire his weapon."

It took 73 minutes between the time the suspect entered the school to when officers breached the door of the classroom and killed him, according to the report.

#### **Lack of communication**

The committee found that by simply setting up a command post, which was not done, the chaos of the moment could have been transformed into order by the incident commander assigning tasks and aiding in the flow of information that could have been used to "inform critical decisions," according to the report.

"Notably, nobody ensured that responders making key decisions inside the building received information that students and teachers had survived the initial burst of gunfire, were trapped in Rooms 111 and 112, and had called out for help," the committee wrote. "Some responders outside and inside the building knew that information through radio communications. But nobody in command analyzed this information to recognize that the attacker was preventing critically injured victims from obtaining medical care."

Arredondo, however, erroneously believed the shooter was barricaded and that responding officers had time on their side to deal with the situation.

"Instead of continuing to act as if they were addressing a barricaded subject scenario in which responders had time on their side, they should have reassessed the scenario as one involving an active shooter," the committee wrote. "Correcting this error should have sparked greater urgency to immediately breach the classroom by any possible means, to subdue the attacker, and to deliver immediate aid to surviving victims."

The report also said of the hundreds of first responders who quickly arrived on the scene, many were better trained and better equipped than the school district police, "yet in this crisis, no responder seized the initiative to establish an incident command post."

"Despite an obvious atmosphere of chaos, the ranking officers of other responding agencies, did not approach the Uvalde CISD chief of police or anyone else perceived to be in command to point out the lack of and need for a command post, or offer that specific assistance," the report states.

"The entirety of law enforcement and its training, preparation, and response shares systemic responsibility for many missed opportunities on that tragic day," the report said.

### **The attacker's motive**

For the first time since the massacre occurred, information on a possible motive was included in the report. "One motive that drove the man behind the massacre at Robb Elementary School was a desire for notoriety and fame," the committee stated in its report, refusing to use his name.

The committee delved into the suspect's background, finding he had been a good student up to the eighth grade. He then quickly took a dark path and became a serial truant that eventually got him kicked out of school in the ninth grade, according to the report.

The suspect attended school at Robb Elementary up to the fourth grade.

"The shooting took place in his former fourth grade classroom, and he discussed bad memories of fourth grade with an acquaintance just weeks beforehand," the committee reported.

The suspect's fourth grade teacher testified before the committee, acknowledging she knew he needed extra help in her class because "he claimed to be a victim of bullying."

The suspect's ex-girlfriend told the committee they broke up in mid-2021 and she described him as "lonely and depressed, constantly teased by friends who called him a 'school shooter.'" She said he also claimed that he was sexually assaulted as a child.

"She said that he told her repeatedly that he wouldn't live past eighteen, either because he would commit suicide or simply because he 'wouldn't live long,'" the report states.

On social media platforms, he expressed an interest in gore and violence, sharing videos online of beheadings and horrific accidents, and sending explicit messages to other online users, the report said.

"Finally, the attacker developed a fascination with school shootings, of which he made no secret," according to the report.

The committee also heard testimony that the suspect told acquaintances he was hoarding money for "something big" and that they would all see him on the news one day, according to the report.

None of his statements were ever reported to authorities, the committee found.

The committee wrote that the suspect began to formulate his plan to attack the school in early 2022 after he got into a "blowout argument" with his mother that he livestreamed on Instagram.

Investigators believe the suspect began stockpiling firearm accessories, including 60- and 30-round magazines, holographic weapon sights and snap-on trigger systems in February 2020. He legally purchased ammunition and guns, including two AR-15 rifles, when he turned 18 in May, according to the report.

The committee included in the report an incident that occurred at Robb Elementary School on March 23, in which a suspicious person dressed in black and with a backpack was seen canvassing the school. The person was never identified, according to the committee.

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HEADLINE	<b>07/18 Boiling point at Uvalde school board forum</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/sparks-fly-ualde-school-board-forum-community-demands/story?id=87035556">https://abcnews.go.com/US/sparks-fly-ualde-school-board-forum-community-demands/story?id=87035556</a>
GIST	<p>Emotions reached a roiling boiling point Monday during an open forum hosted by the school board in Uvalde, Texas, just one day after a <a href="#">77-page report</a> by a joint committee of the Texas Legislature slammed the police response to the incident and the school district's lack of preparation for such an attack.</p> <p>A special public forum held by the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Board to allow community members to ask questions and voice concerns about the changes and updates for the 2022-</p>

2023 school year -- including safety and security plans -- quickly became a tinder box of emotion and anger.

Community members resoundingly said they want former Uvalde CISD Police Chief Pete Arredondo -- currently on paid administrative leave -- fired immediately. As the May 24 massacre unfolded, Arredondo allegedly failed to take on the role of incident commander or transfer the responsibility to another officer on scene, despite it being an "essential duty" he had assigned himself in the active shooter plan he helped write, the committee said.

Many called for members of Uvalde's school district police force who were present during the shooting to be fired, for an independent investigation into the Robb Elementary School failures, and for answers and transparency about their specific concerns following the report.

On Monday night, parents threatened to pull their kids from Uvalde schools come September, and several also called for Uvalde CISD Superintendent Dr. Hal Harrell to resign.

The community also wanted answers on what was known about the Robb Elementary School door being locked or not.

"In violation of school policy, no one had locked any of the three exterior doors to the west building of Robb Elementary. As a result, the attacker had unimpeded access to enter," the committee reported. The committee also faulted the school district for failing to treat the maintenance of doors with known faulty locks with "appropriate urgency."

Speakers at the forum also called for an independent investigation into the massacre. The group was united, calling several times to stand up together -- to be courageous and voice their truth.

After apologizing in his introduction for not having held a forum like this sooner, Harrell, sitting on stage alongside the full school board, opened the floor to questions.

"First of all, I just want to say last time y'all had us on a time limit of sorts, and that's not going to fly today," said Brett Cross, the uncle of Uziyah Garcia. "There's no other way to put it. We have a lot to say, and we won't be silenced and we won't be stopped. So if y'all had the idea of a time limit, it's not going to get followed this time."

Cross was referencing a press conference held by the special committee report Sunday on the failed police response to the shooting that saw 19 children and two teachers killed. Families were invited to attend and ask questions Sunday, and those invited -- including the media and families -- had to fill out compulsory paperwork required by the committee to ask a question. Many members of the community did, but due to time constraints, they were not given the opportunity to ask their questions.

Before the forum began Monday, attendees from the community sporting "Uvalde Strong" matching shirts placed photos of the victims on the seats in the front row facing the school board members.

When later asked by Cross if Arredondo was going to be fired, Harrell said, "That will be a decision... We will take the report into consideration, it will be a closed session."

"I'll tell you this: If he's not fired by noon tomorrow, then I want your resignation and every single one of you board members," Cross responded.

Vincente Salazar, the grandfather of Layla Salazar, addressed the school board saying, "Your system failed these families" and "it didn't save our children. Your closed sessions that... didn't save our children."

"What we need to do now is put families in your sessions so we know what's going on, what's going on. And the way you're spending your money for the security of our children," Salazar continued. "We pay over 40% of the city budget for the school and for the police, and you hired trash. That's not right."

	"I lost a loved one right here. My only granddaughter, I can hold myself together now because I've done my crime. Now it's time to do my fighting. And you have seen me in the papers and you will see me in the papers a lot more. Because this isn't the end. This is just the beginning of a war that you guys created for our children," he added, to cheers from community members in the crowd.
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